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STAND

orporating the Three Arts Quarterly

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Introduction to Shelley Poem

[In 1820 Mary Shelley wrote two short " mythological dramas " in verse, for which Shelley supplied incidental lyrics. One of these lyrics was the well-known

Arethusa arose
From her couch of snows,
In the Acroceraunian Mountains, –

which tells the story of Arethusa and Alpheus. According to Ovid (*Metamorphoses* V, 577-641), the lovely nymph Arethusa was bathing after hunting when the river Alpheus, smitten with her charms, accosted her. She fled, naked, hotly pursued over mountains, rocks, and pathless ways by Alpheus, who had assumed human form for the purpose (Shelley drew a vivid sketch of this mountain-top pursuit inside the cover of one of his notebooks). Hard pressed, she appealed to Diana, who wrapped her in a mist. Alpheus, however, shrewdly observing that no footpaths led out of the mist, prowled round it until Arethusa sweated so profusely with terror that she changed into a stream of water, whereupon Alpheus resumed his river-shape, followed her underground, and mixed his waters with hers when she emerged as a fountain in the island of Ortygia, off the Sicilian coast.

Shelley's " Arethusa ", written in the swinging metre of " The Cloud ", told this story from a romantic point of view and was used in Mary's play " Proserpine ". But there is another version hidden among his drafts, not quite so sympathetic to the nymph. Ovid had hinted that Arethusa was rather prudish (she says, " crimenque placere putavi " – " I thought it wrong to be attractive "), and Shelley disliked prudery as much as he did vanity. The poem, urbane, shapely, mockingly-cadenced, shows his light verse at its best. It is here published for the first time, by permission of the Delegates of the Clarendon Press. There is no title in the manuscript.]

GEOFFREY MATTHEWS

The Pursued and the Pursuer

Arethusa was a maiden
  Bred among the rocks,
And Alpheus a shepherd, laden
    With the love of her sweet looks.
  More than all his flocks
    He loved those sweet looks.

A proud and an ungentle creature
  In her human form
Arethusa was by nature,
    And though fair and soft to see,
  Like a winter's storm
    To her love was she.

On a flattering fountain
  She would ever stare –
Till the maiden of the mountain
    Grew the thing she gazed upon,
  And mixed with waters there
    Fell from stone to stone.

Alpheus would weep and languish
  In a dell of dew,
Till his deep and liquid anguish
    Changed him to a gloomy river
  Whose dark waters must pursue
    Her bright waves, ever!

The pursued and the pursuer
  To the salt sea foam
Through the rocks and woods obscure
    Wound with murmur and with motion
  To the threshold of their home
    In the Dorian Ocean.

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Tides

To wake without fail when milk bottles shake in their racks,
Scrape one's face in the morning, every morning,
Take the same route to work and say ' good morning '
To the same row of scraped or powdered faces –
I cursed the roundness of this earth, I raged
At every self-perpetuating motion,
Hated the sea, that basher of dumb rock
For all her factory of weeds and fishes,
The thumps, the thuds, the great reverberations –
Too much in rhythm; jarring, but by rote.

The metronome it was in my own head
That ticked and ticked; caged cricket in my head
That chirped and chirped until I had no ear
For syncopation, counterpoint of stillness
Beating against all music – of the sea,
Of birds and men, of season and machine,
Even of cricket and of metronome.
In silence I learned to listen; in the dark to look.

And unrepeatable now each morning's light
Modulates, shuffles, probes the daily faces
Often too suddenly different, like the street,
This weathered wall re-pointed, that new one cracked,
Apple trees that I prune while I forget
The shape of last year's boughs, cankered or grown,
And where that stump is, one that died in blossom;
Forget the hill's curve under the aerial masts.

No, wheels, grind on; seasons, repeat yourselves,
Milk bottles, rattle; familiars, gabble ' good morning ';
Breed, hatch, digest your weeds and fishes, sea,
Omit no beat, nor rise to tidal waves.
Various enough the silences cut in
Between the rock cave's boom and the small wader's cry.

The Grey Horse

" A grey horse was washed up on Sunday morning. It was still wearing its saddle and bridle. It had thrown its rider the previous Sunday and galloped out to sea." (News Report)

Six days, death had no coast.
It was the moon's care
Brought it home at last,
Ushering the spare
Blown cargo, without haste,
Up the firm beach
Into familiar air.

Metal and leather still remain;
Cinched, unperturbed, around
A carcase of unridden scenes,
Embittering and shifting ground.

There is a drawl of seaweed lain
Along one cheek,
As if dark elements had tried to speak
And only whispered the beginnings of a rein.

Waves rear, weaken, fall down blind.
God's blue uncoloured lung beyond
Unfocuses my eyes and mind,
And wants its victims with a pillowed sound.

Grains glitter like the sea.
The grey hulk blurs.
Clung to wet flanks
The flecks of sand
Burn through damp air
And dampening sound,
Hot dust from circuses.

Born 1938. Educated at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Darlington and Leeds University. At present living in Leeds.

Building on the Outskirts of a City

A thrush has chosen a high elm tree
to sing across the clangour.

Today, beneath him yet,
moist blades of grass trust
themselves into air.

As a conspiracy of girders blackens
the hill where that grass waits
a man's long shadow
grows thick and yawns over
reddening heaps of materials.
Luxury flats grow here.

Not much yet. But the draughtsman's
lines exist in space
like silence
in a screaming mouth.

A barrow leads a man
rough with cement;
his hands red and dark
like charred roses, while
the clay footprints of his eyes
rest on the surface, heavily.

It drives him towards the verandah :
whistling, he struggles
like a wounded bird
trapped in the architecture.

Born Manchester, 1939. He lived in Tyldesley for the first thirteen years, a place of factories and farms and pits. Educated Leigh Grammar School, Chorlton Grammar School and Leeds University.

Three Poems

GENTLEMEN

We fight, I'm afraid, bite and scratch,
Gentlemen, in our work,
Or meditate, over the lighted match,
The horseman and the flaming brand,
Gentlemen riding to town.

It is a pity, I say, there are so many of us
Stiffly packed in our seats,
A little thinning would not come amiss,
Gentlemen riding to work.

The easy dispersal of ashes – then
O Lord I could pray
For that puff of dirt that nudges me,
Gentlemen riding to town.

Stiff collar, bowler, gloves and
Black tie,
Grey and severe, and in my hand
The salt cambric crumpled away,
Gentlemen riding to work,
Ah, then I should walk for a time alone
Grizzle with fine dignity,
Tender respect when I got back
Unjostled next day in town,
Gentlemen! colleagues!
Unjostled next day at work.

Gentlemen riding to work
Eagerly looking around to choke
Back real grief, real tears,
Looking around as the tube-train stops
For the prosperous figure best fitted for corpse
And, how sad is death, how very sad.

I. THE GUARDIAN

The daisies pat her shoes
With small plump palms, and the gnats,
Fat as red berries on the nettles,
Skim and jig around her head.
So she has to stroll in that corroding air :
Gnats, rheumatic damps in mists,
Processionary wraiths : vaunting herself
In her flesh. I slam the french windows on the lawn.
Now she'll have to push through bushes to the front.
And when she's married I will see her churched.

II. THE CORPSES

Awake, chin on chest, I look down myself
Washed white and soft in the river's smoky track
Spinning and bowing to the sea
Hair snatching at flotsam, toes gashing the ooze,
With nothing to take to the abyss but an insult :
The shove in the back and the river's rancid palm
Smacking my face; nothing but the cuff
Deep in the astonished mouth.

Weep before God

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A Dream (but perhaps it isn't)

by

LUIGI PIRANDELLO

translated by

FREDERICK MAY

First published in STAND, Vol 5, No. 3, November, 1961.

The Characters

THE YOUNG MARRIED WOMAN

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS

A MANSERVANT (*who doesn't speak*)

The Time is the Present.

(The play was originally published in 1929).

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First Production.

Frederick May's translation was first produced by Alec Baron for the Pirandello Society at the Y.W.C.A. Theatre, Leeds, 18 November, 1955. The leading parts were played by Margaret Pickard and Philip Stone.

A PLAY IN ONE ACT.

The scene is a bedroom . . . Well, perhaps it isn't. Perhaps it's a drawing-room. What is quite certain is that there's a Young Married Woman lying on a bed. But perhaps it isn't a bed. It looks more like a settee, the high back of which has been pulled down by means of some sort of spring.

As far as the rest of the stage is concerned, when the play begins, nothing can be very clearly discerned, because the scene is all-but unlit. A strange, unnatural light struggles with the darkness – a light which emanates from the meadow-green carpet lying in front of the settee. This light should look as if it might disappear at any moment and as a result of any movement – however slight – that the sleeping woman might make. It is in fact the light in a dream, just as this drawing-room is a bedroom only in the Young Woman's dream, and just as this settee is a bed only in her dream. In the wall back there is a closed door. On the wall right, over an artistically-worked console, there hangs a large mirror. The console is gilded and shaped like a casket. For the moment you can't see it. Moreover, just at present, the mirror looks more like a window than a mirror. The reason for this illusion is a simple one: in the mirror is reflected the window directly opposite, in the wall left. And naturally, as far as the young woman who's dreaming is concerned, the window is over there, where it's being reflected in the mirror. As a matter of fact, this dream-window will later in the play be opened by the man who will come. The piece of tapestry which will ultimately be draped over the surface of the console below the mirror is lowered for the moment. This runner is of the same material as that with which the walls are covered, and as a result you can't tell where they begin and it ends. Lowered like this, right down to the ground, it serves to hide the void into which, in the dream, the console has disappeared. When the dream is finished the console will reappear, with its runner over it, and the mirror will revert once again to being a mirror.

From the ceiling there hangs an electrolier with three pink globes of ground-glass. At present it's not alight. At a certain moment, there in the darkness, a darkness that is scarcely mitigated by the dream-light, a hand comes out from underneath the settee which is acting the part of a bed. It is an enormous hand and slowly it lifts up the back of the settee. Gradually, too, as the back of the settee comes up, there emerges from behind it a man's head. This, too, is enormous. The features are twisted into an expression of violent agitation, the hair is rumpled, the forehead is deeply furrowed with wrinkles, and the eyes are terribly sombre, as if hardened into an expression of sullen menace.

It is a horrible nightmare mask.

It rises higher and higher, until the figure below is visible down to the waist, and you can see that it's wearing evening-dress under a black cloak and white silk scarf. It leans over the Young Woman. She is terrified. She has opened her eyes and her hands are raised before her face, as if to ward the figure off. She struggles to a sitting position.

The ground light dims and goes out, and the head disappears behind the back of the settee. It all happens in an instant. The three globes of the electrolier light up and from them there comes a very soft, tenuous, roseate light. And now we see, standing upright beside the settee, the Man in Evening-Dress – in full *evening-dress, that is. He is no longer wearing the enormous nightmare mask which formerly he wore. Now his proportions*

are quite normal. Not, of course, that he should appear as a real man. He should appear rather as a man who is being dreamed about, and there should be on his face the same expression of sullen menace. It has, so to speak, been transmuted into verisimilitude.

The scene that follows . . . It will be forever changing in mood, accent and incident, almost as if it were suspended in its utter entirety in the inconsistent atmosphere of a dream . . . The scene that follows will be continually broken into by pauses – some longer, some shorter – and by certain sudden halts in the performance, during which the Man in Evening-Dress will abruptly break off what he is doing. Not only will his gestures be broken off short, but he will not move his body at all. His eyes will remain expressionless, and so will the rest of his face. He will remain just where he is, like a puppet that's been set in position. When he emerges from these periods of halted action, he each time assumes, quite suddenly, an expression which is often in violent contrast with the one he was wearing before the break. These expressions will correspond to the various new aspects of him that the Young Woman shapes for herself . . . The differing inner states she creates for him . . . As she wanders through her memories in the fickle inconstancy of her dream.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: You're here? How did you get in?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*at first he makes no move. Then he turns ever so slightly and looks at her. He takes a small shining Yale key out of his dress-waistcoat pocket, shews it to her, and then puts it back into his pocket*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Oh! So you've found it again? That's just what I thought would happen. When I asked you to give it back to me . . . After your last . . . *Indiscretion.*

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*smiles*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Why do you smile?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*he suddenly stops smiling and looks at her sombrely – so as to make her understand that it's no use her lying to him, no use her trying to make him believe that she took the key back 'because of his last indiscretion'.*)

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*terror has seized her again. She conquers the overwhelming uneasiness which that look of his occasions within her*): There wasn't any other reason why I asked you for it back. I didn't really care whether I got it back. As a matter of fact, I just put it in my pocket without giving it a second thought. It must have slipped out of my pocket on to the carpet. Perhaps it was when I got up . . . When the maid wanted to have a word with me in the other room.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*the moment she turns her head to look in the opposite direction – a gesture to go with her words, 'have a word with me in the other room' – he does the thing she's imagined he's done: that is, with all the quickness of a thief, he bends over the carpet, as if to pick up a key and to hide it immediately in the very place that he's already shewn us does in fact contain it – his waistcoat pocket. As he carries out this move his eyes are alight with malignant laughter. His lips too are twisted by the same malignant laughter. The instant he stands upright again, he resumes exactly the same attitude and expression as before, just as if he'd never moved*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*after having waited a little while for him to say*

something) : May I be allowed to know what's troubling you? Why are you looking at me like that?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : What's troubling me? Nothing. *How* am I looking at you? (*And so saying he moves nearer to her. He bends over her, resting one knee on the flat part of the settee. One hand he places on the back of the settee, the other, delicately, on her forearm*). I can't keep away from you. I'm no longer alive if I can't feel you like this . . . Like this . . . So very close to me . . . If I can't smell the fragrance of your hair . . . As now I can smell it . . . The intoxication . . . . The gentle softness of your skin . . . The perfume of your whole body. You are my whole life . . . *My whole life.*

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*she leaps to her feet and, crossing in front of him, moves away from him. By doing this she gives him very clearly to understand that she finds it intolerable to have to listen to his repeating the same old words of love. And yet it's really she who has made him repeat them, because she has remembered for an instant that he, being in love with her, has appeared before her time and time again, wearing that same twisted and overwrought expression that is now terrifying her in this dream of hers. Immediately regretting that she leapt up as she did, she now stands waiting for him to speak. Since her leap up will have been proof conclusive as far as he's concerned that she no longer loves him, she is now expecting him to pretend that he spoke those words contemptuously. Terrified, therefore, she turns towards him*).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*till this moment he has remained suspended like an automaton in his attitude of lovingness: leaning over the settee, his body stretched out towards where she was sitting before she leapt up. The moment she turns to look at him, he throws himself rudely on to the settee and sits there, his legs sprawled apart, his arms flung wide open. He hurls his head back and bursts into prolonged, scornful laughter. Whilst he is laughing away like this, the back of the settee is gradually disappearing downwards again behind him, until finally it is right down once more and held by the spring, just as it was at the beginning of the play. Gradually, too, the three globes of the electrolier dim their roseate light, and as the back goes down he slowly becomes supine, his head and shoulders resting across the lowered portion of the settee. He continues to laugh throughout the lowering. In the instant of darkness that comes between the extinguishing of the three globes of the electrolier and the coming on again of the ground light, he turns on to one side and lies stretched out full-length along the back of the settee, which once more does service as a bed. He is now leaning on his elbow, with his head resting on the palm of his hand, looking as if he'd been there oh, ever such a long time!, and is now carrying on with what he'd just been saying. His voice is calm and peaceful. A sad smile plays upon his lips as he speaks to her. She is now seated on the settee, by his feet*) . . . Why, of course! A woman can no more compel a man to respond to a love that he no longer feels, than a man can compel a woman to respond to a love that *she* no longer feels. But, if that's how things stand, then *they ought to say so in all frankness.* To say, 'I don't love you any more'.

THE YOUNG WOMAN : So often one doesn't say it . . . Well, out of compassion. Not because one's in any way lacking in frankness. As a matter of fact, if one *could* be frank, it would make things so much easier.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : It may also make things so much easier, for a woman, if she can believe that she's saying nothing out of compassion. When a woman says she's saying nothing out of compassion, then she has already begun to deceive . . .

THE YOUNG WOMAN : No ! She *hasn't*.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : Yes, I say . . . If she's deceiving no one else, she's deceiving herself. Beneath this compassion of hers there will always lie hidden some selfish motive.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*rising*) : Thank you for the high opinion you have of us women.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : But, even when there's no selfish motive, don't you realise that compassion will always be something false?

THE YOUNG WOMAN : I've always understood that deception can also be compassionate.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : What sort of deception? Do you mean when you make someone believe that you're in love, when in fact you're no longer in love? That's a useless kind of deception. The man or woman who's really in love can tell immediately when love is dead in the other person. And God help him if he pretends not to notice ! It's just like *asking* to be betrayed. True compassion, a compassion that doesn't mask ulterior motives, can quite well be, for whoever it is that's expressing it, compassion *and nothing but compassion*. It can never be love. And to claim that it is, is to corrupt that compassion. Inevitably, contempt would be born of such a demand, the sort of contempt that counsels betrayal and leads to treachery. Because . . . Oh, yes ! . . . We ourselves . . . And so zealously too ! . . . We ourselves willed the first betrayal of ourselves by not wishing to be aware of the deception that was being practised upon us.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*resuming her former seat on the settee*) : So you think one should say when one's no longer in love?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*retaining his composure*) : Yes. Out of loyalty.

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Because deception . . . Even when it's compassionate . . . Is a form of betrayal?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : Yes. It's a form of betrayal when a man or a woman accepts it as a beggar accepts alms. (*There is a pause*). I should very much like to know how you would treat a beggar who claimed the right to kiss you on the mouth with a lover's kiss, just to shew you how grateful he was for the alms you'd bestowed on him.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*with an ambiguous smile*) : If the alms bestowed are the alms of love, then a kiss is the very least that that beggar can ask.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*he gets up and stands on the other side of the settee. With an angry jerk he pulls up the back, till it is in its former upright position*) : I was forgetting that I was talking to a woman. (*Furiously he paces up and down the room*). Loyalty . . . Loyalty is a duty . . . The most sacred of duties . . . Something we owe ourselves even more than we owe it to others. Betrayal is horrible ! *Betrayal is horrible !*

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I don't know why you're talking to me like this . . . To-night . . . Nor do I see why you feel the need to get so worked up over what you're saying.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Not what *I'm* saying . . . No, what *you have* said. I'm speaking in the abstract.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: And so, darling, am I. You can't doubt *me*.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: You know perfectly well that I live in perpetual doubt. And that I've got all the reason in the world to do so. (*Resolutely he goes over to the dream-window and opens it, letting in an exaggerated moonbeam and the slow noise of the sea in the distance*). Don't you remember any longer? (*And he stands there in front of that open window, looking out*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*on the other hand, is sitting there, looking straight in front of her, like a woman who is remembering*): Yes . . . Oh, yes . . . This summer . . . By the sea-side . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*still standing in front of the window, as if he can see the sea out there*) . . . A shimmering rhythm of silver in the light of the moon, as far as the eye could see . . .

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes . . . Yes . . . It was quite quite mad . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: I told you . . . I said to you, 'We're tempting the sea, you know, feeling ourselves so safe in this little boat. Why, a single wave could send it to the bottom in less than no time'.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: And you tried to frighten me by leaning first to one side, then to the other . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: And do you remember what else I said to you then?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes. Something wicked.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: I told you I wanted you to experience the same fear that I knew in trusting in your love. *That* made you angry. And then I tried to make you understand that, just as we two were that night tempting the sea, by feeling so safe in our little boat, that the slightest wave might send to the bottom in less than no time, so too did I seem to myself to be tempting *you*, by saying that I was sure of that tiny shred of trustworthiness which you were able to give me together with your love.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: So it seemed so slight a thing to you even then?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Why yes, of course it did! It always is, my dear! Inevitably! Not because you want it to be. I should say that, on the contrary, you really think you can give me a sense of your complete trustworthiness. It's always such a slight thing because you yourself, my dear . . . Yes, you yourself . . . Can never have the slightest certainty that to-morrow you will still love me. That you will still love me from one moment to the next. You see, there came a moment when you felt that you loved me, while before it you hadn't loved me. And there will come, too, a moment in which you will feel that you no longer love me. And then you *will* no longer love me. Perhaps that moment has come. Look at me! Why are you afraid to look at me?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I'm not afraid. I know you're a reasonable man. You yourself said only a short while ago that no one can force another person to respond to a love that he no longer feels.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Yes, that's what one's *reason* tells one. But, God help us! God help us if love is doomed to come to an end in *you* whilst it still lives on in me in all its strength!

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Let's stick to sweet reasonableness. I'd rather you did.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Yes . . . Yes . . . I'll go on being reasonable. I'll go on being reasonable. I'll reason away for as long as you wish, just so as to please you. To stop yourself from being afraid, you want proof that I've still got perfect control of my reason, eh? Well, then! Yes! Here you are, I'll give you that proof. Don't you worry, I understand everything very very clearly . . . Just so long as the flame of my spirit remains alight here . . . And only here . . . (*He taps his forehead*) As you see, I understand very clearly that your love, which came into life in an instant, can also die upon the instant . . . Be brought to an end by who knows what quirk of chance . . . Something unforeseen . . . Something unforeseeable. What more do you want? I even get to the point where I say, 'At the turn in a road . . . Because of some unthought-of meeting . . . As a result of a sudden, blinding danger . . . As a consequence of an unexpected, uncontrollable flare-up of feeling . . . Of passion . . . '

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Oh, that sort of . . . I mean . . . Well, after all . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Why not?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Why, because we've still got our power to reason. Our power to *reason*. We're immediately brought to our senses again by the voice of reason within us.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: And to a proper appreciation of *what* does the voice of reason recall us? Our *duty*?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: It reminds us that we mustn't let ourselves be carried away like that.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: It's life that carries us away. Life bears all its sons away. Life has *always* carried all before it! Why do you get *me* to tell you this? Why *me*? . . . As if you didn't already know it! God help you! God help you if the flame lights up within you here, (*He taps his breast*) and burns up your heart! You can have no conception how foul and acrid is the smoke that bursts out of a burning heart, from burning blood! Burning blood! You don't know the dark and horrible night that this smoke brings immediately into your mind, the storm it brings, the storm that deprives you of your power to reason. Are you trying now to prevent the storm that will launch its thunderbolts at your house, set it on fire and kill you within it? (*As he speaks these words he becomes terrible to behold. The moment he says the word 'storm' a dull rumbling crescendo of sound is heard – a noise like that of a storm – coming from outside the open window, and the moonbeam changes into a livid, flashing burst of sinister light.*)

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*she is terrified and hides her face in her hands*).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*the instant she hides her face in her hands, he remains fixed like an automaton. No longer is there any expression on his face, and he is caught and frozen in the gesture he is making. Suspended. Suddenly too the thunder and lightning cease. The moonbeam becomes its tranquil self again, and everything remains*

fixed in an almost mysterious immobility, which persists until the Young Woman removes her hands from before her face).

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*gets up and, without removing her hands from before her face, takes a step or two in the direction of the window, with the intention of closing it*).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*while still remaining suspended in his attitude of amazement, he moves his head and arms . . . And only his head and arms . . . In her direction . . . As if she, by taking those one or two steps towards the window, had by some force of attraction made him turn like that*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*takes her hands from before her face and looks out of the window. She too stands there for an instant, her senses astonished by the utter stillness and serenity of the moonlight. In her amazement she smiles. She remembers the 'moment' when she began to love this man. It was . . . Yes, precisely! It was in someone's drawing-room, near a window through which the moonlight entered. She turns to him, that smile still playing on her lips*).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*immediately assumes the expression he wore in that 'moment'. That's to say, the expression a gentleman would wear when, standing in such a drawing-room, he sees out of the corner of his eye the lady with whom he is in love going over to the window, and, pretending to be going over himself to the same window to get a breath of fresh air, is utterly surprised to find that she is there . . . Quite by chance, of course!*) : Oh, I beg your pardon! You . . . *Here*? This heat's absolutely unbearable, isn't it? It's just hopeless trying to dance any longer. Perhaps it would be better if we were all to go out into the garden . . . There's a lovely moon . . . And if someone were to stay behind and play the piano. We could hear the music down there . . . Coming to us from the distance . . . And we could dance out in the open . . .Down there in the space round the fountain. There it is, hurling its waters into the air.

(*And from afar off and muffled, as if it came from somewhere higher up, the sound of a pianoforte is heard*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN : I shouldn't have thought that the garden and this lovely moon would have made you want to take *everybody* with you down there by the fountain. No . . . Only the beautiful lady in the pink dress with whom you've danced so many times this evening.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : Why are you talking to me like this? It was you who . . . .

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*interrupting him*) : Sh! Be quiet! They can hear us.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*lowering his voice and being very careful*) : Who told me to stop dancing with you, so as not to attract people's attention. And now you start ticking me off . . .

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*first of all gesturing to him to stop talking and then whispering to him very very quietly*) : Go down into the garden, without letting anybody see you go. As soon as I possibly can, I'll come and join you there.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*now he is happy. He looks cautiously all round the room, to see if anyone's looking, and then takes her hand and kisses it furtively*) : I'm going. I'll be waiting for you. Come soon! (*And he moves away from the window. Cautiously he goes across the room in the direction of the closed door. He reaches it. He turns and*

looks circumspectly round, like a man who's intent on seizing just the right moment for opening that door. He opens it and goes out).

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*remains where she is, totally immersed in the shaft of moonlight. It's as if she were hidden in the opening of the window. Gradually the moonlight and the light that comes up from the carpet dim and go out, while at the same time the sound of the pianoforte becomes ever more faint . . . It seems to come from farther and farther away . . . Because the vision of that 'moment' is slowly being extinguished in her. When it is quite extinguished, and the sound of the pianoforte has vanished with it, there is an instant of total darkness before the three pink globes of the electrolier light up again. During that instant the window is shut again and the Young Woman goes over and sits down on the settee in the same position as she occupied formerly*).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*standing beside the settee, quite motionless. There is the same expression of sullen menace on his face as there was at the beginning*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*after having waited for him to make up his mind to speak, stamping her foot*): My God, you *shall* say something! You *shall* say something! You're damn' well not going to go on standing there in front of me *all night*, looking at me with that awful scowl on your face! (*And as she says these words she almost weeps, because of her anguish at the rage that she has to choke down*).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: It's not my doing. You're the one who's planting this scowl on my face. You know very well that I'm still filled with love for you. And you know very well too that if I were, at this moment, to turn and look at myself in that mirror, I myself, I, just as you see me here before you, should no longer be able to recognise myself. The mirror would tell me the truth, presenting me with an image in which I should not be able to recognise myself. And this image, this *picture* of myself, is something that *you* give me. And that's why you made the mirror disappear, and why you made *me* open it . . . Just as if it were a window.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*almost shrieking the words*): No! *No!* It *is* the window! It *is* the window! I swear it! It *is* the window! It's no use your turning and looking at it!

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Don't worry! I'm not doing any turning. Yes, it *is* the window. I'll wager it's been a window ever since the moment I was able to open it. And out there, I suppose, there's the garden where, for the first time, our lips joined in a kiss that went on and on for ever? And out there too, I suppose, there's the sea that you and I together tempted one moonlight night this summer, h'm? There's nothing terrifies a conscience that's not tranquil more than a mirror. And *you* know that there are other reasons why . . . And they too are a result of what you . . . When I think of what I've done for . . . What I'm still going on doing for your sake . . . There are other reasons why I can't raise my eyes to look into a mirror when I stand before it. And at this very moment . . . At this very moment . . . When you have me standing here before you like this . . . You know only too well where I *am*. You came there once. I'm in that little room at the Club. The yellow room. And I'm cheating. I'm

cheating for your sake. Luckily no one notices. But I *am* cheating. I'm *cheating!* And I'm cheating so that I can make you a present of that pearl-necklace . . .

THE YOUNG WOMAN: No! No! I don't want it any longer! I don't want it now! I told you I'd very much like to have it . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: So as to humiliate me.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: No . . . So as to make you think that I was rather too demanding as far as you were concerned . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: You're still lying! You hadn't the slightest desire to create in me a secret contempt for your extravagant demands upon me. No, what *you* wanted to do was to make me think that you were really meant for a much richer lover. One who'd be able so very much more easily to give himself the pleasure of satisfying your expensive tastes.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Oh, my God! *That!* That's the sort of thing you should have thought about right from the very beginning! You should have thought it out for yourself! Since you knew who I was, and the kind of life I'd always led!

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: And *you* knew who *I* was too, when you became my mistress. I've never been a rich man. I've tried in every way possible to . . . Oh, I've been up to all sorts of . . . ! To keep up with your way of life. Without asking you to make too many sacrifices. Without our relationship's being to your detriment. And all that I've done . . . And that you . . . If you really wished to be honest with yourself for a moment . . . That you must have imagined I was . . .

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes . . . I did imagine that . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Every conceivable device . . .

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes, that's what I imagined . . . That's what I supposed they were. And I admired the way you were able to hide from me the sort of plight you kept finding yourself in.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: I could do all that because it seemed like nothing to me. The very least I could do in return for all that you gave me in recompense . . . Letting yourself be loved by me.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: But you did demand that I should consider . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: *What*? No, I didn't!

THE YOUNG WOMAN: What did you mean, *you didn't*? Why, you've just been appealing to me to be honest with myself! You asked me to consider just how much it cost you . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: As I've already told you, the answer's 'Nothing'! Just as I hoped that it would cost *you* nothing to give up your more expensive tastes.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: So that you wouldn't be forced to buy things that I knew you couldn't possibly afford. Why, of course! As a matter of fact, I've given up a great deal! I've given up a very great deal. You can't have the faintest idea just how *much* I've given up.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Oh yes, I can! Oh yes, I can! I've got an *excellent* idea!

THE YOUNG WOMAN: You think it's quite natural, do you?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Yes, loving me as you . . .

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I was furious, I can tell you!

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Because I thought it was only natural that you . . . ?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes. Just because I loved you, I wasn't supposed to want anything else! And then . . . Yes, I did it on purpose! That evening . . . When we were walking along past that window . . . The jeweller's . . . Yes, I did it on purpose! Quite quite deliberately! I wanted to be cruel.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: And do you really think I wasn't aware of that?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Did you think I was cruel?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: No. Merely a woman.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*striking her knee with her clenched fist, then getting up**): Again you say that! Don't you realise that it's the fault of you men that women are what they are? Just because you have this conception of them! It's your fault if they're cruel! It's your fault if they deceive you! It's your fault if they betray you! Don't you realise that?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Gently, now! Gently! Why are you getting in such a temper? Do you really think I'm not aware of the fact that what you're doing now, is hunting for a pretext that'll serve as some sort of an excuse for what you've done?

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*she wheels swiftly on him, utterly astounded by his words*): I'm . . . ?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*his face set*): Yes . . . You are . . . What are you looking so astonished about?

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*embarrassed*): Excuse for what?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: You know perfectly well what for. I said 'Merely a woman' just now, so as to correct your use of the word 'Cruel'. It seemed just to me, not cruel, that you should . . . That evening, when we were passing the jeweller's . . . That you should, jokingly and in deadly earnest, give that particular sigh of greed. (*He imitates her sigh, repeats her words. It's just like a child when he's given his favourite dish. He accompanies the words with that gesture which children usually make when they're yearning for something they're particularly fond of in the way of food . . . That's to say, he rubs his tummy with his hands . . . Several times, quickly*). 'Oooooh! I *would* like that pearl-necklace!'

She laughs and suddenly, whilst she's laughing, there's a blackout – a total blackout. And in this blackout the showcase, which will have been visible right from the beginning of the play – it's in the wall back, just by the closed door – will be freed (by means of a wirre or some other piece of apparatus) from the two strips of painted cardboard that hold it in place. The strips of card, by the way, must be so fixed that they do *come away easily. The case is lit from above by means of a powerful spotlight which isolates it from everything else, and it appears as the glittering window of a jeweller's shop. On show in it there is a great number of pieces of jewellery. They look quite unreal, and in the middle of them, in a prominent position, and arranged on show in a most artistic manner, is the pearl-necklace, set in its silk-lined case. It too looks most unreal. In the selfsame moment that the shop-window, all lit-up like this, appears – appears like a fascinating vision – the Young Woman stops laughing. The vision persists for a long time in absolute silence. The isolating force of the*

* *An error? Pirandello assumes a little later that she is still seated.*—F.M.

spotlight should be so great that neither the two characters nor anything in the room is visible. Moreover, the two characters turn their backs on the showcase. The vision of that jeweller's shop-window is for the audience alone. As far as the characters are concerned, it's as if they had the window there before their eyes. Then, at a certain moment, two hands reach forward, as if from inside the shop . . . A man's hands, but delicate and very white. They brush the curtains to one side . . . The curtains, that is, which serve as a background to the shop window . . . And very carefully pick up the pearl-necklace. Then . . . Though the vision of the window doesn't vanish . . . The three pink globes of the electrolier light up again, revealing the Man in Evening-Dress and the Young Woman. They're standing quite motionless in exactly the same places as we left them in. They're held by the fascination of the thing and it makes them speak stiffly, in lowered voices. They stare straight ahead as they speak).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Do you want me to steal it for you?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: No, no. It was just a whim that flashed through my mind. I don't want it! I don't want it from you! As I've already told you, I said I wanted it just to be cruel to you. I know quite well that you can't make me a present of it. Not unless you steal it.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Or else steal from other people so as to be able to buy it for you! Which is what I *am* doing! While all the time . . . Did you see what I saw? Other hands . . . Other hands have taken that necklace out of the window . . . To give it to you . . . *And you know it . . . You . . . Know . . . It!* (*And at this point he breaks from his rigid pose and turns to her, his face and manner truly terrifying*). And you dare to tell me that you don't want it from me! *H'm*? I'll be bound you don't want it from me any longer! You'll get it from some other man! You've already betrayed me, you cheap slut! (*He seizes her by the arms because she, terrified by his words and manner, has got up in an endeavour to get away from him*). And I know who it is! *I know who it is!* You slut! You *slut*! (*He shakes her*). You've resumed operations with the lover you had before me, now that he's come back from Java, rolling in money! Oh, yes! I've *seen* him! I've *seen* him. He's still keeping discreetly in the background, but I've seen him all right!

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*all this while she's been struggling to free herself from his grip. Now she gets away from him*): It's not true! It's not true! Let me go!

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*again he seizes her. He throws her on to the settee and stands over her, his hands about her throat as if he meant to strangle her*): So it's not true? I tell you, I've seen him with my own eyes, you bitch! You're expecting to get those pearls from him! While all the time I'm plunging my hands into filth for your sake! Robbing my friends at the club! You wretched, miserable creature! Just so as to make you happy! Just so as to satisfy your taste for cruelty! (*He is towering over her. He is about to strangle her. Already she is yielding under his ferocious grip. All the lights flicker. Suddenly they go out, because she is dreaming that she is dying, strangled by him. Complete blackout. This must last the shortest possible time. During it a number of knocks on the closed door is heard. They are exaggeratedly loud, persistent, dull in timbre,*

with something unreal about them – as if they were resounding in a dream. Meanwhile, the two strips of cardboard are re-attached to the showcase, the casket-shaped console comes forward, its tapestry runner now on top of it, and the mirror becomes a true mirror once again. The window is no longer reflected in it, because the window, which is in the wall left, is open. When the Man in Evening-Dress disappears, a glorious mass of light from a setting sun enters through it, and fills the stage with the limpid, tranquil light of day. Immediately this light comes on, the knocking on the door, instead of sounding loud, dull in timbre and somehow unreal – as it was – becomes real . . . That's to say, soft, discreet. There must be not more than three very distinct knocks. At the same time we see the Young Woman waking from her dream. She lifts her hands to her throat, so shewing the audience that she has felt as if she were suffocating. Breathing with some difficulty, she takes several deep breaths, so expressing the terror which, in her dream, has held her in its grip. She is still almost stupefied by the dream she has dreamt, and she looks round the room, rather like a woman who finds it somewhat difficult to make head or tail of the reality which she now sees all about her. She tries to get up from the settee, but her legs give way beneath her, and she falls back into a sitting position. She hides her face in her hands and sits there for a moment or so like that. The three discreet knocks on the door are heard once more).

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*getting up. She stands for a moment, straining to hear, before she replies*): Come in. (*She goes over to the open window, tidying her hair in a vague kind of way as she moves. The Manservant enters, carrying a tray on which there is a jewel-case wrapped in tissue paper and tied up with silver ribbon. He moves in her direction. She stops him, saying*): Leave it on there, will you? (*She gestures in the direction of the console. The Manservant leaves the package on the console, bows and exit, closing the door again behind him. For a moment or so she remains where she is, as if in suspense. In that package is the precious gift which she has been expecting. But her joy at receiving it is in sad conflict with the recent terror of her dream and with the threat to her that it contained. That's to say, if her lover, whom she has just now seen in her dream – terrible to behold, and pressing down upon her – should really suspect that she has betrayed him. And the proof of that betrayal is there on the console. Yes, there it is. She goes over to the console, quickly, almost furtively, as if on purpose to hide the package. She picks it up, darting a long suspicious glance in the direction of the closed door. Then, unable to resist the temptation to look at the present, she unties the ribbon with trembling fingers. Then she opens the jewel-case, takes out a visiting card, and reads the words written under the name on it. Finally she takes out the pearl-necklace. She looks at it, studies it, admires it. She smiles. Holds the necklace to her breast with both hands, half closing her eyes. Tries it on in front of the mirror – putting it up to her neck without, however, clasping it at the back. Again there is a series of knocks on the door. Immediately the Young Woman takes off the necklace, seizes the visiting-card from the top of the console, opens the drawer which is masked by the runner, and hides everything inside. She then turns in the direction*

of the door and says) : Who is it? Come in! (*The Manservant comes in again and holds out a visiting-card. She says*) : Shew him in. (*The man who, in her dream, was dressed in tails, enters the room, ushered in by the Manservant. Now he is serene and everything about him seems brand new. He is wearing a lounge-suit. We shall continue to call him the Man in Evening-Dress*). Oh, my dear, do come in! Do come in! (*The Manservant bows and exit, closing the door again behind him*).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*after having bestowed a prolonged kiss on the hand that she has stretched out towards him*) : Have I kept you waiting?

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*simulating the greatest lack of concern*) : No, no . . (*She sits down on the settee*). Do I look as if I've been asleep? Are my eyes all funny?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*after having looked at her for a moment or so*) : To tell you the truth . . . No. (*Then, softly*) Have you been asleep? (*He sits down*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Yes, for a moment or so . . . In here . . . I suddenly found myself feeling terribly sleepy . . . Strange . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : . . . Did you dream at all?

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*simulating the greatest lack of concern*) : No, no. It really was only for a moment. I must have . . . I don't know . . . I must have come over faint. (*She caresses her neck with her hand*). I . . . I suddenly felt myself becoming breathless. (*She smiles*). Please ring the bell, will you? We'll get them to bring in the tea. (*He gets up and goes over and presses the button of the electric bell over by the mirror. Then he comes back and sits down*).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : I was afraid I was going to be late. I've suffered a disappointment that's put me out more than a little. I'll tell you about it later. (*The Manservant knocks on the door and enters*).

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Bring the tea. (*The Manservant bows and exit*). What sort of disappointment?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : I wanted to give you a surprise.

THE YOUNG WOMAN : *You* wanted to give *me* a surprise? (*And she bursts out laughing*).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*offended*) : Why do you laugh?

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*continuing to laugh*) : Give me a surprise . . . *You*?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : Do you think it's not possible any longer?

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Oh yes, my dear. Anything's possible. But you know how . . . Well . . . When you've known one another for such a very long time, surprises . . . And then you put on such a dismal, hard-done-by tone of voice to tell me the sad news . . . (*Mimicking his tone of voice and the air with which he said it*) ' I wanted to give you a surprise ' . . . (*And she bursts out laughing again*).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : Yes, because I really was most disappointed.

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Willing to bet I can't guess?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : Guess what?

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Wait and see. Was it on *my* account that you were disappointed, or on your own?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : On *your* account. *And* on my own as well. Because I wasn't able to give you the surprise I'd intended to give you.

THE YOUNG WOMAN : In that case I *have* guessed what it was. This'll shew you that you can't surprise me any longer. (*She walks behind his chair and leans her two arms on his shoulders. She doesn't embrace him. She intertwines her fingers, rests her clasped hands on his breast and puts her face close to his*). Did you really and truly want to give me that pearl-necklace?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : I went into the jeweller's to buy it . . . (*Then, with a sudden start of surprise*). So you knew that it'd been sold?

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Yes, my dear. That's why I was able to guess what your surprise was.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : *How* did you know?

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Oh dear, oh dear! *How* did I know? When I passed the shop yesterday evening . . . I noticed it was no longer in the window.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : It was there up until four! I saw it myself.

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Ah, no . . . It was later than that when I . . . . Round about seven . . . It wasn't there then.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : Strange. You see, they told me it'd been sold only this morning.

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Oh . . . You asked them?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : As I've told you, I'd gone on purpose to buy it. And that's what they said . . . That they'd sold it only this morning.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*pretending to be perfectly indifferent*) : To whom? Didn't they tell you?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*hasn't the slightest suspicion, and, as a consequence, attaches not the slightest importance to her question*) : Yes, they did. To a gentleman, they said. (*Then, drawing her round till she's in front of him*). But, my dear . . . Oh, do pardon me if it sounds presumptuous . . . If you could guess so quickly . . . As soon as I told you how disappointed I was . . . If you could guess so quickly that the surprise was meant to be that string of pearls . . . Then it shews that you must have been thinking about it.

THE YOUNG WOMAN : No, no . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : What do you mean, *no*? And that you were expecting me to bring you it.

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Oh, dear! I knew that you've been having an incredible run of luck at cards these last few evenings at the club.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : Yes, I have. And do you know why? I'm quite sure that this is the reason. The fact that you shewed so very plainly that you wanted those pearls . . . Well, it gave me a tremendous, burning desire to . . . It was as if a dazzling clarity had come upon my mind! It helped me enormously. I never lost once. It was just as if I was inspired.

THE YOUNG WOMAN : Have you won a great deal?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS : Yes, a great deal. (*Then, with a sincere transport of emotion*). And now you'll help me find something else

. . . Something beautiful . . . *Very beautiful* . . . A beautiful present for you . . . Something you'll like very very much.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: No! No!

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Yes . . . So as to help me forget my disappointment at not being able to make you happy this time.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: No, my dear, No. I never really seriously thought about those pearls . . . Or whether you might be going to give me them. It was just a momentary fancy that evening . . . When we were passing that shop. You know what it's like. No! No! I'm going to be a good girl.

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Yes, I know. I know that you *are* good. You're so very good and kind to me. But everything I've won these last evenings is yours. Yours, and no one else's. Of that I do assure you. I owe it all to you, and to you alone.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: So much the better! In that case, I'm even happier that things should be as they are. That I should have helped you to win, and that you weren't able to get those pearls. Now, don't let's talk about them any more . . . Please. (*A knock is heard at the door, and the next moment the Manservant comes in, carrying the tray of tea-things*). Ah, here's the tea! Let's have tea, shall we? (*The Manservant puts the tray down on a small, low, lacquered table near the the console, and then carries the table over and sets it down in front of the settee. Before he can start setting out the tea-things the Young Woman says*): Just leave it. I'll do that. (*The Manservant bows and exit*).

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS (*an odd, reluctant note in his voice . . . Speaking rather as if he were talking just so as to say something*): Oh, do you know what? They say he's come back from Java . . .

THE YOUNG WOMAN (*pouring out the tea*): Yes . . . Yes . . . I know . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Oh, so *you've* heard too?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes . . . The other evening . . . I can't remember now who it was that . . .

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: It seems he's made quite a pile of money out there . . .

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Milk or lemon?

THE MAN IN EVENING-DRESS: Milk . . . Thank you.

CURTAIN

An Author in Search of Producers

Surprisingly little seems to be known in England about Luigi Pirandello, the Italian novelist and playwright, who died in 1936 and of whom *The Times* said; " It is largely to him that the theatre owes its liberation, for good or ill, from what Desmond MacCarthy called ' the inevitable limitations of the modern drama, the falsifications which result from cramming scenes into acts and tying incidents down to times and places ' " Only a few of his major works such as *Six Characters in Search of an Author, Henry IV, Naked* and *The Rules of the Game* have been published in English and as a result there is a tendency to classify Pirandello as a purely intellectual writer, prone to " cerebral gymnastics " and most difficult for an actor to interpret. Those who find him so might first study a little the life of the Man and in so doing they may reach a better understanding of Pirandello the Dramatist.

Pirandello was born at Caos in Sicily in 1867. He studied letters at Palermo University and later in Rome and Bonn. For many years he taught at a teaching-training college for women, living in comparative poverty and growing steadily unhappier in his work. His marriage ended in disaster when his wife became mentally unbalanced and had to be sent to a mental institution. His literary efforts began with poems, short stories and later, novels; he did not start writing seriously for the theatre until 1915 at the age of 48, after which he gave to the stage no fewer than 43 plays in Italian and several in Sicilian.

For several years he was in charge of his own theatrical company, which had as it leaders Ruggero Ruggeri and Marta Abba, and many of his plays were written as tailor-made articles for them and for the rest of his group. In order to please his public, Pirandello could not permit himself the luxury of writing only intellectual drama which was so much ahead of its time that it could not be accepted as a commercial proposition; he had also to write plays which conformed to the style and idiom of other playwrights of his day, such as Roberto Bracco or William Archer. Plays which were concerned with heroes and heroines and dramatic situations in which members of the audience could recognise " the woman next door " or even identify themselves.

Having lost a considerable sum with his own company, and greatly disillusioned because his native Italy considered him " too original to pay " (often his plays were translated and performed abroad long before they saw the footlights in their original tongue), when already in his seventies he announced that Europe had grown too old for him, that it could boast of only one other young brain (Bernard Shaw) and that he would take himself off to a country of new ideas – and he journeyed to America.

Pirandello was a fiery, passionate man who had reached his own particular outlook on life through adversity and through years of tortured wondering at true significance of reality. His primary concern was with the illusions and self-deceptions of mankind and the nature of identity.

His works grew – as Eric Bentley points out – " from his own torment, and through his genius they came to speak for all the tormented and potentially *to* all the tormented, that is, to all men." He delighted in creating an unusual but logical situation – developing it seemingly illogically – and by continually tossing the coin until both sides had been clearly revealed, managing to convince his audience that his unconvential and not very credible treatment was in fact wholly logical and convincing.

Many of his plays were written in the style known to the Italians as " grottesco ", comedies developed tragically or tragedies developed comically. Nearly all spring from intensely dramatic situations – situations in which passion, love and tragedy make their presence felt strongly. In England theatre productions of his works have been few and far between, and this may be due partly to the fact that producers and actors when faced with a play of his sometimes assume : " He is going to be far too difficult for the audience so it will be up to us to put that right ! " By approaching the text with the preconceived notion that a particular interpretation must shine like a beacon between author and audience in order to elucidate matters, one often succeeds merely in confusing the issue further. There have been examples of this author's brilliantly cynical humour, behind whose mask we are meant to see our own selves, being deliberately distorted to the level of unacceptable farce in an attempt to " clarify ".

If Pirandello's plays were approached more simply, were permitted to play *themselves* more, and did not have the Latin sentiment and human compassion ironed out by their interpreters, perhaps the fear that one may not be able to follow him would be removed from the minds of many of our theatregoers. It would be found that his comedies, as Kenneth Tynan says, " wear their 30 odd years as if they were swaddling clothes ", and his works might then even find themselves a humble niche in our commercial theatre. As it is, they are confined to performances by our more ambitious club theatres and by thoughtful amateurs. Not so on the continent : his works are in the repertoire of established companies in almost every capital of Europe, and – what is more – have even proved to be financial successes – at a time, alas, when royalties can no longer benefit him.

Jerzy Ronard Bujanski's production of Pirandello's *Henry IV* at Cracow, 12 July, 1958. Henry IV was played by Jerzy Kaliszewski and the Marchioness by Zofia Jaroszewska.

Six Characters in Search of an Author at the Comédie des Champs Elysées, 10 April, 1923. Georges and Ludmilla Pitoëff were in the principal parts.

The B.B.C. put out the first television play in the world, Pirandello's *The Man with the Flower in his Mouth* (14 July, 1930). Earle Grey was The Man, Gladys Young his wife. Lance Sieveking produced.

Liolà at the Theatre Royal, Stockholm, 11 September 1953. Mimi Pollak was the producer and Karl Julle played the title-rôle.

Frederick May's production of *Bitter Waters* (Pirandello Society, Civic Theatre, Leeds, 14 August, 1959). Frederick May (standing) as the Fat Man, John Brewster as the Thin Man.

Gita Marks as Nina Ciampa, Philip Stone as Ciampa and Cicely Bradbury as Beatrice Fiorica in *Cap and Bells* (Pirandello Society, Civic Theatre, Leeds, 20 January, 1958). Frederick May produced.

ignora Emilia Frateili. Painting in oils by Luigi Pirandello (Viareggio, 1919)

LUIGI PIRANDELLO was born at Caos, near Agrigento in Sicily, 28 June, 1867, and died in Rome, 10 December, 1936. Novelist, poet, philologist, short-story writer, dramatist and critic, he is best-known in this country as a dramatist. His *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921) marks a turning-point in the history of theatre, while his *Henry IV* (writtenimmediately afterwards) is among the greatest of modern tragedies. Major, too, are his essay on *Humour* (1908; revised and expanded, 1920), his novel *The Late Mathias Pascal* (1904), and many of his short-stories, of which well over two hundred have been published. He is undoubtedly a master of the *novella*, and ranks as one of Italy's foremost writers in this medium. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1934.

FREDERICK MAY is 40 and Head of the Department of Italian in the University of Leeds. He has translated over 50 Italian plays (25 by Pirandello) and written a number of articles on Pirandello and Betti. He has contributed to Lo Vecchio Musti's bibliography of Pirandello and in October 1961 gave one of the chief papers at the Pirandello Congress in Venice. He is preparing a critical biography of Pirandello, a volume of his short stories and a study of his plays. He will shortly publish a series of articles on Ugo Foscolo's *Essays on Petrarch*.

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The Importance of Hogwash

I work in a factory. It's a small factory. A family firm in leather dressing. I look after the packing, the dispatch, the sending our goods out department. It's at the end of a long stockroom where the leathers get checked, and passed, and ticketed, and priced. There are two blokes and two women in that end, and there are supposed to be one experienced packer, or two semi-skilled, at my packing end. I can't quite cope on my own. I need about half a man to help. But of course our kind of factory doesn't have spare halves of men, and so the bosses they advertise – strong youth required for packing department of light leather dressing factory. Since I've been there we've had three of these strong youths. The work is rather like sewing mailbags only we have to put rolls of leather inside. We use old sacking. They call it wrappers. You lay the sacking across a low table, and put down string, and then corrugated cardboard, and then pile up a nice symmetrical pattern of rolls of leather skins; a dozen in each roll. Then you put the corrugated round the pile, tie tightly with string, place the sacking round the corrugated, and sew it all up. And there is a bale. The bale may weigh $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. or it may weigh $2\frac{1}{2}$. The work's not hard, and the money's not bad, and it's a five day week, but the bosses can never keep this other man for more than a few weeks. The other man changes every month or so. Apparently I hold something of a record for staying power for my age. I can't understand it. The work has variety. Each bale is a different shape, a different weight. There are different types of skins to be rolled up. There are different stitches for different bales. There is never a dull moment; a constant variety – you couldn't get bored, and it isn't very dirty. It's a little dusty, and the sacking they use is only just post war, but there is such infinite variety in the shape of bales. And yet people don't stick in the job. Possibly it is because they really only want half a man, and they can't really advertise for just half a man.

The first half a man was about 18/19– secondary modern, alright, quiet, good worker, no trouble, decent, upright, no steady girl, smoke but no drink, alright. He idolised Elvis Presley and lived for cycling.

Why did you take up cycling ?

I wanted a sport, and I went along to this club and joined up.

What you mean you knew a lot of people in the cycling, lot of friends?

No, not really. I just wanted a sport.

What makes you go for all this cycling?

Well it keeps you fit.

I can't get it – why didn't you take up wrestling or owt like that? (he gets the meaning). It's a man's sport you know. It's as dangerous as motor bike racing. Look (picture from magazine of Tour de France and rider going into back of a lorry).

Alright, alright. I don't say it's not. You like to go professional then?

Course I would, but I'm not that good and in any case you need a manager and you have to go onto the Continent.

Tell you what – I'll manage you, straight ! ! !

FABER

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Yvonne Kapp and **Michael Hamburger** have translated this collection of stories, poems and anecdotes. It was compiled by Brecht himself immediately on his return to Germany from exile in 1947 and contains most of the short stories he wrote and considered worth preserving. This volume is in the same format as *Bertolt Brecht: Plays*, Volume I, published last year. **15s**

METHUEN

Now and again he went down to the central caff. Every Friday he bought a disc magazine. Cut out pictures of pop singers in colour from somewhere and hung them on the wall. He stayed about a month, and then went into engineering. There's no future in leather. I want to go where the chances are good.

He was alright.

The second half a man was a bit older, about 22/23. He'd come from the building. It got too much what with the overtime they expected you to do, and I wanted a lighter job and indoors. He was alright, decent, upright, and all that. First morning he came he turned up about quarter hour early, but from then till he left he made it about an hour late. Then he'd had enough half-way through the afternoon so he'd clear off then. I often wondered what he lived on.

I can't get up in the mornings.

What time you go to bed then?

When the telly goes off.

I can't get it.

It's just I feel tired.

You kidding, he was tired all bleeding day.

If you let them see you working too hard they'll expect that sort of pace from you all the time, so I'm going to take it steady.

He had a girl friend and the two of them spent most nights watching television. He played darts for a pub, skittles for another. Apart from that and work he never seemed to go out. He was all for the solidarity of the working classes and all agin the bosses. About the first question he asked me, was who were the bosses' men around here. He really had got it agin the bosses' men. He was all for the Labour Party, and we'd talk politics, and he even wanted to ban the bomb. Read the paper a lot. He'd come in about hour late and spend ¼ hour telling us all about what was on the telly last night, and all the local reported crime from the papers – who'd been having who and where, and who'd been having what off. He liked Real Madrid's style of football. But although he was so lazy there was still only enough work for about half another man, and so he was always bobbing around helping out here and there. He didn't like that, and one day he had the boss over it, and told the boss he came to be a packer, not an odd job man. Well, the boss said what about a rise to keep you happy. But by the time the boss got round to saying this he'd had the boss and the job and the whole shoot. He asked for his cards. The boss could stick his job and his factory and the mingey rise. He told me all about this when I met him in the street. So I asked him how much the boss offered him. And he said the boss never got round to talking figures, and as he'd heard you couldn't get more than a penny an hour or so out of him there wasn't much point. So I told him how after fighting the boss for about a fortnight I got a tanner an hour rise. So he said I must have been a bosses' man or something. So I told him that when you worked in a place like that where there weren't no union you had to stand up and fight for yourself, because no-one else would. So he said he saw what I meant, and only wished he'd known it before, but on the building he told me if you ever wheedled even a penny an hour out of them it was like a windfall and he thought leather was like that. I told him you didn't have to crawl on your hands and knees for a rise, all you had to do was stand up and have it out straight with the boss. So he said he'd know next time, but he was in engineering

now, where there was more money, and where the money was, and there was a union there and so he was alright. But he'd had about twenty jobs already so I expect he's somewhere else now. He was alright.

The third half of a man was about 20/21. He had come from the brewery. I liked him. We got on alright. He left secondary modern school, and went into an office so he must have been brighter than most and then he got cheesed off so he odd jobbed around and then he got on the town with the lads, had a couple of scrapes with the law but no real trouble. Then he drifted down to the brewery with all the liquorice allsorts. Then he got engaged and steadied down, took this ½ a job and got himself married.

I reckon I'll stay here now. I got to steady down. And in any case she's having a kid. I don't want a girl, not for your first kid. It isn't right is it?

He probably will. I'm leaving next month, and he's still there so he'll drop nicely from his half a job into my 100% thing.

He could work and would work hard. He watched the telly but the ads. didn't go in, with only a few exceptions. The ads. were for the laughs. He liked Elvis, but there were others too. Like two old men on the war we'd sit down and talk of our raughting days, and the things done and seen and all the laughs. For both of us there was common ground in this. Though for him those days were over. He had grown up, and come to terms and settled down. I liked him.

I thought about all this, because I was asked to do a bit for a magazine and I was left open. I tried about three different ideas, ideas that I wanted to sort out for myself, and the possibility of sorting them out in a publishable way for which I would be paid appealed to me. This was one of them. It's very interesting because these three people I met through circumstances. None of them would I have gone out of my way to meet. And while working with them, I had little thought of sitting down and thinking about them, and trying to put them into what I'd previously experienced, trying to see them in some sort of focus, theoretical pattern. Take two things, and the attitudes towards them – the Labour Party and Americans.

The Labour Party –

No. 1. doesn't care – takes in conservative freedom, engineering, the golden opportunities, the adman's message.

No. 2. agin the bosses' men, for the solidarity of the working classes, the old world Labour Movement, even the Co-ops. Liked the 'Tonight' programme on B.B.C. T.V. We talked about religion, and he couldn't see the use in it. We talked about science and the things they say that have to be taken on trust; and about the future – better off without the bomb.

No. 3. I suppose he wouldn't make the polling booth. Politics, religion, science – we didn't touch them. We stuck pretty well to being on the town, town society; people, pubs, sex; the texture of things.

The Americans –

No. 1. Elvis is a Yank and so they're alright – again the take in of the golden gate and the golden state; and why isn't it like that over here.

No. 2. Yank go home – Imperialist – Bomb carrier –

No. 3. Fancied the Bowery – like to go to the Bowery – where is the Bowery – alright. Knew a lot of Yanks. Liked them. But we'd be better off if they went back.

Then I tried fitting what I knew, and could reasonably assume about these three into some sort of pigeon hole on character. Almost all of us have some kind of hero and for most young people there are two contrasting types of hero, or model. There's the soft hero, the dream boy. The lonely young man, I wanna be loved by you; the one who stands up there and waits for the golden age to reach him; the one who'll wait for the girl to move across, for the sugar-daddy to arrive. Into this would fit Elvis Presley, Cliff Richard, and to some extent Colin MacInnes' absolute beginner. For the first half-a-man who came to our packaging place, he would be in this. For the second he wouldn't be in the world where there are things to be lonely and lost about, where dreams don't count. And for the third he'd be out of it all.

The third of these three half-men belongs to the other pigeon hole – the raughter, the go-getter, the hard hero. In the same class as Alan Sillitoes's Arthur of Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, Gene Vincent. The wild one, the one who cuts across the dream world, taking the piss out of the ads and the pops, and moving into the four letter word. For this third half-man this world is the dream, and the idea. For the first it is out, out because it's over the line of the boom society, out because it's over the line of morals and ordinary social contact. But for the second it is as out as the dream world of the soft hero.

The pigeon hole for the second goes back to before the war, to No Mean City, and the radio, and racing and the darts team and beer and skittles. He is in the solidarity, the solidarity of the working class. He's for the riot agin the bosses' men, just as the first is agin riot, and the third is for riot, if it wasn't for the girl and steadying down.

And so where are we – three ordinary people – one soft, one oldie, one hard; one Coca Cola, one beer and skittles, one best and bottled; one take in, one agin Them, one take off.

But the pigeon holes apart, and in spite of the accuracy of the pigeon holes, the one fact above all this is the ordinariness. They are all white first-class British citizens above all else – one of the Anglo-American Alliance, one of the Labour Party and one of our home, and the lads. Gaitskell is so right. The ordinary people won't stand for any real revolution, the ordinariness of the past is the one tradition that really does get carried through.

But he is so nearly wrong. Because they are ordinary not because, but in spite of. Ordinary out of fear, fear of themselves, the bosses, the bosses' men, the wife, the intellectuals, criminals, do-gooders. Scared of what will happen to them, and to their country when the penny really drops that we are moving towards being a small multi-racial neutral island.

Working in a factory with them I have to keep remembering that the ordinariness, their decline in action and their acceptance point blank of the past and their fear of any move away from this comes to a very great extent from their having no chance to follow any ideas, any action, through. By the time the dream of being a pop star or a professional cyclist has grown to the stage where it is admitted openly to oneself one has had to come to terms with the factory. By the time one has worked out a way of

raughting and staying in the town without going into nick, or onto the National Assistance, one has had to come to terms with the factory. Before there has been time for 'Tonight' on T.V. to be taken in, and any ideas on work and the Labour Party to come through, the factory steps in. One has to have money to live. To work out a way of getting money, legally without the factory, or office, or shop, needs time to explore, fall, and think about why. And before one can do this the factory steps in, and you take a five day week and a wife and a house and automatically conform and dissent in all the traditional places.

But of course for students and schoolboys money is a grant; the factory is postponed, time is there for working out and following through.

And from there I can move on to the time me and this third kid were talking about sex. And he started off on pansies and fruity boys, and nancy boys and all that. He worked down at the brewery once and while he was there they took on a load of local students, white and temporary. Now they all got grouped together as being – queer, beatniks, arty farty, hoity toity, and the whole bunch of tricks you get when students start getting barracked and named Gladys and Mabel and Priscilla and Auntie and all that.

And then some weeks after this I was at this party and what he said hit me – for there were among others the Aunties this mate of mine had been talking about.

There were the superior :-

Pansy Ken – research into something classical at a civic university where he got first class degree. Said he tried to look as little classical as possible. Hair – flat, lifeless, parting; trousers grey flannel, well pressed; coat off tweed, off colour, on style hacked. "My landlady who is working class hasn't said these things are meant to try us."

Musical Beardie – research into something musical at civic after upper second class in arts. "What magazines are there today that take poetry as poetry." Face – fat, stubbly beard : hair – unkempt : trousers – black 16" bottom : coat – check, stained. "Kitchen sink is out. I'm tired of hearing all this about the working classes. Art is for art's sake and the artistic minority, not for trade union masses. They don't want it anyway."

Anonymous Alan – self educated plus a little grammar school and a little drama school anonymous London. Reading poetry in schools. Caravan theatre in wet weather and bad holiday weeks on the coast. "When we're out of work the National Assistance Board owes us a living because we're doing all this for art and it is worthwhile. We are preserving the sanity and the higher things in our society. We make the sacrifices to keep art alive for the future generations, and it has to be kept alive because it is one of the higher things. We are the cultural ambassadors." Clothes and face – anonymous, unpressed.

Intellectual Jack – Upper Second Oxbridge working class. Clothes – jeans and jacket : shoes – continental : hair – long. "The trouble is that I feel I'm on a different plane than my parents and background, yet I don't want to leave it." This is perfectly genuine. Dual approach – can't take a commercial job because moral reservations, as about jobs equal to I.Q. and training – yet "There he is, a first from Cambridge and then wants to teach in a grammar school, so stupid with such wonderful qualifications." Writes, novels and metaphysical treatises. Rarely submits. Nothing published. Follows Hogwash arguments at a far deeper almost

metaphysical level, and ends up with no conclusions. Too bloody clever and knows it.

Then came the Labour Party, end and otherwise. "The difference between socialism and a conservative freedom is that it doesn't work; the difference even if conservative freedom did work is that socialism considers a society where each of us helps our fellow man." Doing good the vegetarian way with a small amount of cooked meat served in an anglo-saxon way. Dress and face can be various. The nonconformist doctrine minus God. Gaitskell without the L.S.E. and the backroom boys. The Co-operative Movement without the retail shops. I stood up and said: "Come revolution we'll all have jam, the butter and the bread; come the revolution, and we'll all have a car and a half and come the revolution we'll have no work to do." And one of them stood up and explained to me the economic arguments in great detail on why there must be work. So I moved onto the colour of buses in different parts of the country and I was given a full course meal of public transport under conservative freedom followed with the moral why this cannot work. They didn't grasp the effect of alcohol.

Then there were the technologists, bureacrats, scientists. They provided jazz, sick humour, base philistinism, white American slang, and best British in clothes and talk and faces.

I want to learn the tenor sax and go professional.

Really – (and you go one further on). You don't want the bright lights and the spot light and the worship and the one night stand?

You get an embarrassed negative – The Dream Boy is not exclusive to the lower orders.

And then comes Hogwash in the two varieties – culture and society.

Culture – Somehow art must reflect and get across. "People think it's an affair but isn't. I'm just probing him. Have been for the past two years, only he doesn't know it. It's fascinating, finding out, and he'll never know." It's like scoutmasters, the saddest part of it all is that what they tell you about their motives are just too true, they really are. The capacity for good intentions is remarkable. "No, but you see I know I'm so intellectually superior to the average man in the street." There are no points of contact. The sociological comment, content, facts – asking the questions – does this reflect, will this get across?

Society – the essence of life is in the streets and on the towns and in the pop culture and all that, and breakthroughs must come from below." We must infiltrate down below and then worm our way up working with the people." Worker priests in art. "We must have good pop songs. It would be interesting to see just how many pop singers like Frank Sinatra, for example, would stand up to a full scale critical appraisal." Both varieties are dressed as the ordinary second oldie half-a-man at the factory – they would be lost in the crowd on any Saturday afternoon shopping spree. Lost behind bicycle handlebars and B.M.C. motor wheels.

And then came the grammar schoolboys – with past connections with the labour party youth movements, feeling embarrassed about not being able to go the whole hogwash road. Feeling rootless socially and intellectually. Going to the beer and piana bars in the back streets and joining in and lurving it and being lurved. And going to jazz clubs and coffee bars and walking home to be in before midnight; and feeling embarrassed about liking it more than hogwash Kerouac and Ginsberg and Corso and the old man Henry Miller.

Now all this roll call down to the last pigeon hole have roots in art, and culture, and music, drama, poetry, sociology, hogwash. The last lot have roots that if they are there at all come not from art but from Life with the capital L. They are not in the beer and piana bars to socially observe, but there because they like it and they like the night out. They have a contact with the soft and the hard and the oldie that the other pigeon holes don't reach. The other pigeon holes with the exception of hogwash either want no contact, or don't know how to make out.

Hogwash has stressed the dangers in this keeping apart, the need for contact, and this sixth form generation is a logical follow up from the work of hogwash. It takes hogwash into practise, and makes the contact with the other side of the young, the side that will have to come to terms with the factory.

Yet at this brewery the group that didn't get the bird was hogwash. Why? Hogwash has hit on the way the factory deadens, moves the take in point up and lowers resistance, and follow-through and criticism, and Life, and the nibbling cynicism. Hogwash has found the state of the present, and realised the vulnerability of the ordinary, and why this is bad for all of us.

The sixth form generation hasn't found this, or won't. " This is the only life I shall have, so why should I make peace with the factory." True they go to the beer and piana bars with their eyes open. But they don't go there to socially observe and this is wonderful. They go there for a laugh and because they like it, yet they don't miss much. And they read the beats because they too talk and write of Life and the personal, and the I, and leave the higher cultures and the lower cultures and the long and short of revolutions right out. But in doing all this they miss the essential that has to be kept in mind, the constant, the reference, the common denominator – the ordinariness and the inevitability of it, in our time. And this is the pity because when the reference goes, Life with the capital L gets left in the wilderness, and is on a par with Art and The Higher Things, and The Two Orders of the Mind, and all that.

If one looks at what has happened through literary history since the end of the Hitler War the pattern, and the way in this country the long revolution is taking place – it's enough to make one jump up and wave the flag, and shout and weep and cry for joy. The only trouble is one isn't quite sure which flag one ought to wave – Union Jack, or Hogwash, Red, or Life.

First there came the angry young men and there was Osborn who took to the movies and money and works on the constitution of the rebel through the ages. And Wain who wrote a book and took to reviewing books for the Sundays in railway trains. And Amis who took to the same and worse and novels on nothing at all. And Colin Wilson who took to books and brainpicking and Cornwall. And the newspapers had copy gifts for years. And it all finished up with the papers being very embarrassed over Sillitoe and MacInnes and their pigeon holes, and missing the arrival in fact and fiction of two clear cut heroes – the soft and the hard.

And then there was kitchensink with the crowd who didn't go to University, and refused to be learned. There was Wesker who went over to the working classes, and trade union arts. And there was a woman called Delaney who did a play and had worked in a mill, and did the working classes.

And all my generation lurved all this, and lapped it all in; and hated the first nighters for doing what they did, and wanted to scream that

what the first nighters did was true and there were, and still are millions and millions left behind with the Daily Express, and a Super Mac, and they aren't East of Suez any more.

And all the while, growing and growing was Hogwash, the definition of culture and the definition of society, and where the two meet. And Williams goes to Cambridge, and Hoggart sits on Pilkington and the Queen has her representatives of the working classes. But, and we must not forget the world we live in will be that much better, the world will have changed that much if only Hogwash really comes off.

And then there was the New Left, which went down to the working classes and to ordinary people and to the younger generation and everyone talked a great deal, and marched a great deal, and once again let us make no mistake the talk is positive, and serious, and important.

And the talk in the papers, and magazines, and at the parties where all the alright people are is of the long revolution, of the future, of the working classes; how take offs have to start from the ground level, of the importance of grass roots. And combines have grown up and printers and publishers are all cashing in on hogwash and the waiting lists are still there at the libraries for hogwash, and the right people can afford white hearth rugs.

But somewhere along the line Life got left behind. I have to live now, not in some glorious socialist future. I have no wish to dedicate my life and give all I have to that future. I believe in it – yes. I want it – yes. I will do my best for it – yes. But the future will be as meaningless as the state of the Soviet Union, or Macwonder, or the United States if we forget and lose the art of Living, and dreaming, and every now and again remembering that not everything in the world we live in has a social meaning, content, context; not everything is material for hogwash.

I too have read this magazine, this booklist, this book, this paper, this bloke on the working class, this on the future, this on young people, this on the faults of the present and the hopes of the future; and seen and read through the eyes of hogwash. But somewhere along the line one wants desperately to read this book on ME full stop; Me and what I dream about, think, live like because in the world I have to live in now, through no fault of mine the most important thing I know is ME, I; and the way I live now. My own existence is more important to me than the complete ins outs of hogwash.

And so I listen and read the heroes of hogwash, both pure and applied, and I read and hear of them going off to the Committees, Trade Unions, Films, Institutes and Lectureships at all the best and most important and most needed places, and I feel it is wonderful for them personally that they should be able to do this, and it is wonderful that all these institutions will take them in and pay them and not restrict them. But I keep on wondering where is the life they lead, what have they got to tell us about how to live now. Where is the message, the emotion, the belief. Is it just look around and cry, and look around and then think forward and hope and work. Is this all?

And so, what of the next generation, the new crowd. I have applied my hogwash, and have found people who travel across England and Europe buying up Corso, and Miller, and Kerouac – looking for a new religious revival, looking for a way of life, reading snippets of hogwash in the papers and having by the force of their argument to agree, and leave it at that to move on to more closed parties, and beer, and the piana, and jazz joints.

And so this next generation they scribble and scribble and literary editors write back and say (actually of course they only send rejection slips) but one feels they do really say ' you must put in a washing of social comment, you must refer to the central Hogwash and the state of society 61, be relevant and in tone and then if it isn't quite so bloody we may be able to consider it for publication in our magazine which as everyone knows is read by people who are alright.

And so in creeps the dream boy again – the dream of the dark glasses and the man behind them from the review or the publisher that takes stuff without social comment and pays, and the recognised writer who lives down our way and lives and isn't all tied up with his institution, and its hogwash in practise through the institution.

In the popular approach there are young people and there are two sets who are on the fringe – there are the raughting boys (teddy boys) and the next generation from the grammar schools (beatniks). For the raughters the choice at a certain age is simple – to raught and get caught or settle down, and come to terms and move in with the ordinary people. But for the next generation the choice is delayed. There is time to carry their moving around through to a stage where they can fit it into the rest of their life.

I wrote a pamphlet on young people, and a lot of people I know read it; and there were two comments I found interesting and fair, both from friends.

The first – Why did you forget the ordinary people? You went for the raughting and the fringes and left us out. Didn't you think ordinary people were important. You painted a picture in dirt. I got the idea that you loved the dirt and wanted to make everything dirty, and that you had forgotten the ordinary people, like us. This was from young people, ordinary people.

And the other comment was from both the raughters and from this next generation – Yes, I read it. It was alright. I liked it. I suppose those people interested in that sort of thing will like it too.

Now I have put those two comments in not to boost a pamphlet that did alright but because I have heard many times the same things said about other things. The first one from ordinary people on the kitchen sink, on the hogwash taken into life and romanticised, on the social heroes of Saturday night and Sunday morning. Not that there is any objection to the hero as a person, but to the implied fact that the hero is representative of a section of society.

The second comment from both the raughters and the next generation is on the pure Hogwash – that this is an alright theory and something that ought to be applied but it is something that has no relevance to my own personal life; that it doesn't touch on how I am to live, on anything ' deeper ' or ' higher ' or more emotional or personal. Now of course hogwash isn't meant to be any sort of private moral teaching, or myth. No

one is going to quarrel with that, but in it again by implication is the idea that myth, and dream, and private world, and the personal is irrelevant and not important; that the essential is the social backcloth to our lives.

We must not forget the importance of what has happened, the tremendous importance of Hogwash, the importance of the social, the backcloth; for it remembers that most of us, even the next generation will have to come to terms with the backcloth, that the factory will come in some form or another and that it will take equal rights with sleep on our time; that it remembers ordinary people. The importance of hogwash is being recognised and developed and there is a next generation living in a world of practical hogwash on the ground. But the next generation find that hogwash tends to forget the search for something that applies and touches the ME, some model, belief, idea for living life now; that it forgets the texture of life and only concerns itself with the form. The importance of hogwash is that in this next generation the acceptance of hogwash doesn't lead only to social awareness and concern and follow-throughs of the arguments, but takes off from hogwash into a search for more, for a something that matters personally, a private life, a private dream to come true; that however important the form it is the texture that really counts; and it is here in this aftermath that hogwash can come true.

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IAN HAMILTON

Conrad Aiken—Selected Poems

(O.U.P., 27/6)

At the start of his literary career (and it is worth noting that his career has been almost exclusively literary), Conrad Aiken professed himself to be in pursuit of a sort of 'absolute poetry', and his enthusiasm for this objective has not flagged through fifty years of verse-writing. If this selection is enough to go on, he is writing as badly now as he did in 1917, and for much the same reasons. In a review of his own early volume of verse, *The Charnel Rose,* Mr. Aiken characterised 'absolute poetry' as a sort that was not simply intended to arouse an emotion or to persuade of a reality but rather was concerned to 'employ such emotion or sense of reality with the same cool detachment with which the composer employs notes or chords'. In respect of form he pressed this musical analogy still further and claimed that he had evolved what he called a 'symphonic poem' the basic strategy of which involved the selective juxtaposing of contrasting and conflicting 'poetic tones'. The full recipe demanded, roughly, one tone per section of the total work, with each section casting its characteristic tonal glow about the sections preceding and succeeding it, thus modifying their particular tonal natures. The final work became, then, – in Mr. Aiken's theory – an elaborate structure of an intricately contrapuntal texture which would work on the reader through his 'sense of contrast' and have as its chief feature 'its elusiveness, its fleetingness, and its richness in the shimmering overtones of hint and suggestion'. Now this is all very well, but isn't it the old story of the poet aspiring to a condition of music without taking account of the limitations (and the special potentialities) of his instrument? At any rate, the old questions must be asked. *What* is hinted and suggested so shimmeringly, what kind of tones are contrasted, and why these tones and not others; what, if its intention is not to arouse an emotion or persuade of a reality, does this 'absolute poem' do? What, in short, is the lived and living material that is organised here and how does this process of quasi-musical organisation render it more compelling, more available, to the reader? These questions are not answered in Mr. Aiken's theorising, nor are they silenced by his poetic practice. Although he has long since abandoned the specifically 'symphonic' form (which turns out to be little more exciting than a cocktail of styles from decadent-romantic to dry Eliotic – *Senlin* has lines straight out of *Prufrock*) and has even passed through an exceptionally bleary phase in which his normally aureate and distended rhetoric was reduced to a bitten-off, enigmatic note-form, he has never in any significant way retracted this view of poetry as something that shimmers rather than reveals. And, consequently, his poetry – at its best – does, simply, shimmer: it bemuses with antitheses and echoes, conflicts and contrasts, it ultimately impresses as a phenomenon as illusory and tantalising as the dreamed experience that forms its recurrent subject matter. More often, though, in its drive to liberate itself from the deadweight of words, his energy has faltered to a compromise of diffuse, rambling banality that no amount of ingenious shifting of 'emotion masses' has managed to enliven.

Perhaps Mr. Aiken's main fault – aside from his misguided zeal after an 'absolute poetry' by musical criteria – is that there is nothing solid in his universe. His reading in psycho-analysis (we are forever being told that he was the first poet to 'make use of' modern discoveries in this field) and in philosophy led him to question, obsessively, his own identity, the validity of his sensations, and his assumptions concerning the 'reality' of the 'outer' physical world. The boundary between the 'inner' and the 'outer' landscapes, between the doors, stairs, passageways (these images abound, incidentally) of his mind, and 'actual' doors, stairs, and passageways is, for Mr. Aiken, a meaningless one. He thus becomes a prisoner in a world, in which no element being more 'concrete' than another, clarification and verification by means of such ancient poetic strategies as, say, metaphor or symbol is made impossible.

The question is, – can the poet, whose work is to a great extent based on the assumption that there is an 'objective' frame of reference by means of which he can illumine 'subjective' areas of experience, call *all* in doubt? Can he be a philosopher any more than he can be a musician? What is certain is that had Mr. Aiken 'made use of' what are, after all, general assumptions about the visible world of object and action and enacted his dilemmas *in terms of* these assumptions, we would know and care more about his particular experience of them. As it is, he takes it for granted that we find him interesting and puts the question baldly, and rather badly:

> 'You understood it? Tell me, then, its meaning.
> It was an all, a nothing, or a something?
> Chaos, or divine love, or emptiness?
> Water, and earth and air and the sun's fire?
> Or else a question, simply?'

and replies:

> 'Water and fire were there,
> And air and earth: there too was emptiness.
> All and nothing, and something too, and love.'

And so, over 62 long *Preludes to Definition* (a representative title this) the interior dialogue drones on, at much this level of intellectual and verbal distinction. We are left dazed, and to be frank, bored, wishing that Mr. Aiken would take his own advice, in respect of his poetry, when he exclaims:

> 'You are you?
> But what is you? What is this thing called you?
> A seed, a leaf? a singing congregation
> Of molecules? an atom split in two?
> Electrons dancing in a magic circle?
> A world, of which self-knowledge is the centre?
> Laugh, and forget yourself: despise and change
> Hate, or do murder, love, beget, despair.'

In the course of these 270-odd closely printed pages, there are lines and fragments which persuade one of Mr. Aiken's ability to handle any one of these themes more than adequately. But as it is, he never gets far beyond that paralysing question 'What is this thing called you?'. One can do no more than repeat it, sorrowfully.

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KEITH SAGAR

Socialism and Culture—Richard Wollheim

(Fabian Tract 331).

Some weeks ago I listened to 'Any Questions'. Halfway through I had to consult the Radio Times to discover which was the Labour M.P. All four panellists had, up to that point, answered questions with the same urbane complacency. I had something like the same experience when reading 'Socialism and Culture'. I kept turning to the front to confirm that I was in fact reading a Fabian Tract and not a publication of the Bow Group. The comparison, I later realised, was unfair to the Bow Group, who would have given us something more positive and less superficial.

The pamphlet is clearly intended as an attack on the New Left and, particularly, on Raymond Williams. 'Utopianism' the key term of abuse, is set against the 'Present Compromise' which Wollheim takes to be a satisfactory starting point for the culture of the future. Unfortunately, such terms as "the culture of the future" or "a Socialist society" are never defined. The occasional hints – "a far higher level of prosperity and security" – suggest that the word socialist is being strained of all meaning by applying it to the society envisaged. None of Mr. Wollheim's criticisms are made from a position which is recognisably socialist at all.

Indeed, most of the criticism rests on a wilful misreading and misrepresentation of the case. Socialism assumes that man is a social animal who cannot fulfil himself as a vagrant, exile or rebel any more than as a subject or servant (The Long Revolution, Part 1, Chapter 3, Section 3). A civilised man needs not only the maximum of individual liberty, but also the maximum opportunity to participate with others in pursuing certain creative ends, to place his own talents and energy at the service of a culture whose purposes he can believe in, and to draw life from that culture.

Lawrence stated the case finely in 'Fantasia of the Unconscious':

> "Men live for ever from an inherent sense of purpose . . . It is the desire of the human male to build a world: not "to build a world for you dear"; but to build up out of his own self and his own belief and his own effort something wonderful. Even the Panama Canal would never have been built simply to let ships through. It is the pure disinterested craving of the human male to make something wonderful, out of his own head and his own self, and his own soul's faith and delight, which starts everything going. This is the prime motivity."

And again in 'Nottingham and the Mining Country':

> "We have frustrated that instinct of community which would make us unite in pride and dignity in the bigger gesture of the citizen, not the cottager. The great city means beauty, dignity, and a certain splendour. This is the side of the Englishman that has been thwarted and shockingly betrayed. England is a mean and petty scrabble of paltry dwellings called 'homes'. I believe in their heart of hearts all Englishmen loathe their little homes – but not the women. What we want is a bigger gesture, a greater scope, a certain splendour, and beauty, big beauty."

This is what is meant by an organic society – not back to the land, rural craftsmanship and so on – a society which gives maximum scope for the expression of a finely civilised common humanity.

Raymond Williams formulates the case in this way :

> " If man is essentially a learning, creating and communicating being, the only social organisation adequate to his nature is a participating democracy, in which all of us as unique individuals, learn, communicate and control." (The Long Revolution, 100)

This is not so revolutionary a proposition. Even T.S. Eliot in ' Notes Towards a Definition of Culture ' goes some way towards it :

> " We shall look for culture, not in any individual or in any one group of individuals, but more and more widely; and we are driven in the end to find it in the pattern of the society as a whole . . . It is only by an overlapping and sharing of interests, by participation and mutual appreciation, that the cohesion necessary for culture can obtain."

In his section appropriately titled ' A Reaction ', Richard Wollheim reveals that he does not accept this case. His argument is that we are being asked to support the revival of an old form of society :

> The most radical and by now the most persistent theme is the plea for the reconstruction of traditional working-class life – what Hoggart calls " an ' older ' order." (11)

Wollheim means ' reconstruction ' quite literally :

> " I find it a strange distortion of the old Socialist ideal that we should build a new Jerusalem in the image of the slums of Wigan or Hunslet." (15)

(We might find this a strange distortion of the case, a caricature of it. This becomes the pattern for the rest of the book. The case for State subsidy of the arts, for example, is attacked as if grants to individual artists chosen by the state had been proposed.) It follows that we should not complain about rehousing schemes which involve " the disruption of an old way of life without the offer of a new ". It is not allowed that a modern housing development could still be a neighbourhood or community. Indeed the desire for such a thing is dismissed as sentimental nostalgia. Behind all this is the assumption that the traditional working-class way of life " with its emphasis of neighbourhood, mutual obligation, and common betterment " (Williams) is merely a defensive response to external pressures, to a hostile environment, comparable to the comradeship of the trenches. Relax the pressure and the spirit vanishes, the community is atomised :

> " We have no good reason to think that this spontaneous fraternity and unity of sentiment can be recreated without the circumstances that were its occasion : and no one in his sane mind would think the price worth it." (12)

Aldermaston marches and such-like demonstrations of spontaneous solidarity are dismissed as " transient " :

> " It holds no general message for us about how life should be lived."

The case for humanising labour is also attacked. The New Left, it is stated, advocates the abolition of the division of labour! Against the demand that work should be " demanding, dignified and creative " Wollheim advances the incredible claim that there is " emotional value " which ' certain forms of work that it would be natural to think of as boring, possess on account of the opportunities they offer for the frequent repetition of simple and quasi-mechanical movements ". (Shades of Chaplin.)

assume that there is any problem of work also assumes, we are told, that everyone makes " exactly the same demands of his work." (27)
There is a similar use of pseudo-psychology a few pages later when Wollheim quotes with approval C. A. R. Crosland's claim that a high average level of income is just as good as an even distribution of it " on the grounds that the higher the level of income, whatever its distribution, the greater the subjective sense of equality ". Making people unaware of inequalities is just as good as removing them.

The section on education is the most revealing of all. The ladder image of education, the hierarchy of merit, is perfectly acceptable to Wollheim. For education is seen merely as " a social investment ", a means of selecting those " who will have most to contribute to economic efficiency " (33). The purpose of education for the individual is to increase his potential standard of living :

> " A system of rights and duties, which is based solely on the universal aspects of man and which totally disregards all utilitarian considerations like rewards and incentives, is bound, when put into practice, to result in a decrease in social welfare. And if it is now objected that the level of social welfare is not to be reckoned in such materialistic terms as the standard of living, the only retort is that the great majority of people in the world, to whose interests, after all, Socialists cannot be indifferent, calculate in just this way." (34)

It does not occur to Mr. Wollheim that the purpose of education might be primarily to provide them with other ways of calculating. The main reason for reforming secondary-modern education is to make it easier " to retrieve out of it children of ability who have got into it on account of late development ". How far from Wollheim's mind is any conception of a common culture is evident throughout : " Society's continued ability to make use of the individual talent and ability it contains," depends on a competitive system.
Also, we are told, it is now too late to separate education from the status-race.

Given that there is no such thing as fraternity or an inherent social instinct, it follows that the new culture must itself create a sense of participation, of community, in the face of universal individualism. A common culture is therefore seen as something prescribed and imposed, not as something which we hope will grow when the barriers are down.

Wollheim specifically denies that there is any common element in human nature (46). Perhaps it is only an act of faith to believe in a common humanity, but it is a faith which seems to me to be essential to any kind of socialism. Equally, Wollheim's atomism is undemonstrable. It leads him, however, to the strange conclusion that " the true sources of discontent and ill-health in society " are " disorders of the mind " – purely subjective – and are therefore more properly approached by the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst than by the sociologist or political thinker. This association of discontent with ill-health I find profoundly disturbing.

LONGFELLOW

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The Railings—Alan Brownjohn

(The Digby Press, 12/6; Poetry Book Society Recommendation.)

This is the first collection of Alan Brownjohn's poems to be published, although he was known as a writer of promise when he was at Oxford. The slowness in the appearance of his first book has been brought about by the reluctance of established publishers to accept his work. Now it is thanks to the little-known Digby Press that this collection is available, and it is a satisfying reward for their enterprise that the Poetry Book Society has given it their recommendation.

On the dust-cover we are told that these are ' poems concerned with love, politics, culture, time ', and also that one of Alan Brownjohn's other activities is writing on world events for the journal of a leading trade union. It comes therefore as no surprise that his approach is at the same time objective and warmly human.

His poems concerned with the apparently arid subjects of ' politics ' and ' culture ' are not theoretic and abstract, but acute observations of people in situations. Where there are conclusions to be drawn, it is the reader who must draw them; the poet only states, in context, what he sees. The longest poem in the book, *William Empson at Aldermaston,* gives the lie direct to those militant critics who believe that all anti-nuclear demonstrators are hysterical exhibitionists. The prevailing quality is of a poignant helplessness; life is challenging death, but behind barricades death allows only impersonal structures to be seen, made outwardly gay,

> With death designed as smiling, to conceal
> His proper features . . .

while inside are the workers who elude responsibility :

> But let there be some praise, where that is due :
> For paint, of enlivening colours, spent
> On all these deathly offices. Where typists sit,
> Who do not make the thing,
>
> Or scientists, who do not fire the thing,
> Or workers, who obey the scientists,
> The rooms are beautiful.

The irony of this passage is the strongest expression of his own feelings Alan Brownjohn allows himself. And at the same time he is completing the setting of the scene for the nature of the conflict he sees,

> Two sorts of carnival clashing : on this side
> The mud, or grass,
>
> The boots and stoves and caravans; that side
> The trim discreet pavilions of the State.
> And one more contrast marked these gaieties :
> This side there seemed
>
> Some thousands, while of death's there wasn't one.

He suggests too a kind of infection of death in life in the families of the workers at the factory; the children who did not come out, inquisitively,

> But stood behind held curtains, listlessly,
> With tight and puzzled faces, . . .

To him,

> That deep blankness
> Was the real thing strange.

When he is looking at social situations of an entirely different kind, a similar directness of presentation – where necessary edged with irony – is the strength of the poetry. In *Whose Highest Dreams* he shows the furniture of the ' captive minds ' of city children,

> Round-topped and straight in every meagre street
> Lopped city trees are what the children draw;
> Whose highest dreams are chromium thrones for princes
> Driving to love in cars . . .

making his point much more incisively than he does in the inner stanzas of pure argument, little though one may wish to quarrel with the substance of what he has said in these. And no rebel against bourgeois complacency has more effectively shown the quality of its ' virulent proprieties ' than he has with the quiet wryness and selection of characteristic detail in *Snow In Bromley,* coming to the conclusion that

> Within one mile of here there is
> No lovelier place to walk than this,
> On days when these kind flakes decide
> That what it boasts of, they shall hide.

The firm intellectual control of this poetry, and its anti-romanticism, are conscious qualities in Alan Brownjohn's writing. There is one poem about poetry in this book. It suffers from the notorious uneasiness of such poems, but it is a clear statement of the kind of writing he aims to achieve. It begins with a description of autumn, looking *for* nothing, but *at* everything that distinguishes autumn from other seasons. He then comments,

> One large word said nearly
> Everything needed; and you read, and lost,
> The heart of every season, overlooking
> All these small essences that matter most.
>
> Our labour, once, was easier : instead
> Of piecemeal fragments building up a truth
> We used the one vague (but impressive) word.

The effectiveness of this kind of writing depends entirely on an exact understanding of what are the significant, distinguishing details in both the sense-impressions and the emotional qualities of any experience. At its best it can uncover many layers of meaning in the most ordinary situations. It is completely successful in the poem *Bad Advice,* which describes two alternative paths, one much-used but dangerously near a cliff-edge, and one more safely inland,

> Running inside a fence put up for sheep.
> Longer, but wiser, to go by this,
> Though it gives no particular view of the sea.

His final stanza captures every shade of the temptation and fear to go by the dangerous path :

> Walk that path. Surely no hurling gusts
> Of todays bleak wind could unbalance you; no jut
> Of risky earth would loosen to betray
> Such daring feet; and haven't you nearly
> Lost your old fear of heights?

In other poems, when the poet does not entirely trust his image to convey his intention, and he adds a gloss (*Red Ink Bubble,* for example) it can give the impression that meanings are being wrenched out of the ordinary incidents of living. As soon as images have to be explained they lose their force.

In some ways the love poems are the least satisfactory of all, not because their observation is less acute, but because the intention is to expose the littleness of emotions commonly accepted as great. This is, logically, no more inappropriate than to reveal deeper significances in experiences easily shrugged off; but however wryly one has to acknowledge the accuracy of his analyses, and however wholesome it is to be disillusioned, the effect of seeing something inflated brought down to realistic proportions is to make the act of deflation itself seem unimportant. He chooses disturbed relationships to write about; times soon after quarrels, when uneasiness and constraints persist, but the heat of anger is gone; or times when the disproportion of an unequal love relationship makes itself felt.

> If we are still together, it is because
> Of the need to weed the garden.
>
> Sustaining and disinterested deeds
> (Which you might call love)
> Are at a discount, but the house still stands.

This is not an insignificant achievement, technically, but whereas in *William Empson at Aldermaston,* for example, there is a strong thread of moral resistance, even if there is no explicit hope, here there is only resignation. Moral resistance is a quality deeply needed today; the resignation we too easily achieve for ourselves.

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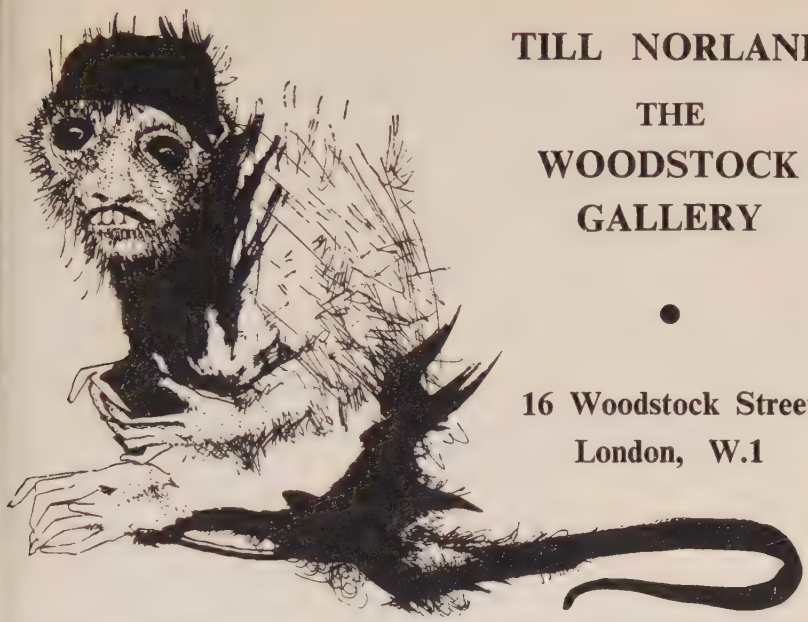

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PANTALOON, or THE VALEDICTION, by Philip Toynbee
(Chatto & Windus, 1961, 18/-)

TARES, by R. S. Thomas
(Rupert Hart-Davis, 1961, 10/6)

A SMELL OF BURNING, by Thomas Blackburn
(Putnam & Co. Ltd., 1961, 10/6)

Why is it that nowadays there is such a relentless fashion for stories that follow the same characters year after year through four and even five dimensions, and never come to an end? What, in England, began as a sport in the 1840's with *Wuthering Heights,* and continued as an aimiable eccentricity in Trollope, seems now to be almost the usual form of the novel. There is Henry Williamson, who rewrote *Tarka the Otter* seventeen times and who in the Thirties completed a four-volume history of Mad Willie Maddison; today the ninth volume in the clairvoyant, slovenly saga of Willie's brother Philip is on the library shelves. There is Lawrence Durrell, creator of a tetralogy which (as Pursewarden used to say) " is not travelling from a to b but standing above time and turning slowly on its own axis to comprehend the whole pattern ". There was Joyce Cary, and there is C. P. Snow. Is it just that a passionate interest in human continuity has come to life now that the generations are likely to end soon, as Scheherezade kept herself in existence by making up endless fiction? Or are we, perhaps, at the beginning of some new imaginative grasp of Time, made inevitable by the present great speed-up of the human clock, comparable to the imaginative change started two centuries ago by fossils and social revolution? *Pantaloon,* we are told on the dust-wrapper, " is designed to be the first volume of a series in which, through his central character, Mr. Toynbee will explore the principal attitudes and experiences of our time, and also the inner history of his picaresque hero ". We can't know yet, that is, quite what is intended, or even if the later parts of the work will be in the same experimental form as this one; but it seems safe to assume that the hero will assist at such things as the Olympic Games of 1936 and the artificial removal of demonstrators from Trafalgar Square in 1961, and is meant (since his " inner history " is lovingly, not satirically described) for an embodiment as well as an observer of his century.

The book's title derives from the lean and slippered pantaloon, now in his eighties, who is supposed to be telling this story of his life to a young man, Olaf, at the end of the twentieth century. The inversion of T. S. Eliot's " Gerontion " is of course deliberate in this very Eliot-conscious writer: here the boy is being read to by an old man who, it appears, *was* at the hot gates and did heave a cutlass (" famous, one day, in many arenas "). It is not easy to see how the old man can be regarded as representative, in any vital sense, of the attitudes and experiences of our time, except perhaps as that of a world passing away. His full name is Richard Ingmar " Fatmouse " Abberville; he is the son of Lord and Lady Welburn, of 16 Carlyle Mansions and of Ramillies, their Vanbrugh

country seat; and although Toynbee does not pamper his creature (his own elder brother, as it were, by three years) his basic attitude towards him is certainly a self-involved one. How this apparently basic discord in the scheme of the series will be resolved into "some kind of musical sense" remains to be seen in later additions to the saga.

The novelty of this novel is that it is written mainly in verse. This seems a successful experiment on the whole – indeed, it was the prose interludes that worried me most and that I found myself trying to skip (disastrously, because the prose gives most of the biographical facts, among other things). There is no straining after lyrical intensity, which could not be sustained (or borne) over such long stretches and would only have resulted in purple patches; but the verse (Eliot's commodious but saintly line refurnished during the Thirties) is tough and clear, sometimes admirably so, describing Guernsey cows; a lipstick (with obscene rightness); a boy fishing:

> That thin grey immanence of water has become –
> A stippled trout, wet velvet to the touch of loving fingers;
> The perch's humped-back glory of orange fin, barred flank and golden belly;
> The hieroglyphic, snouted pike.
> We ravish the beauty of our fish
> And take the very thing they meant to hide from us.
> We touch what the water withheld.
> Oh yes, we violate the depths:
> They draw us and cry to us because we can never live there.
> We can join the longed-for life only by drawing it up into the stifling air,
> Which we, too, breathe with pain, remembering water.
> Born from water, falling from water into air,
> We deliver each fish by a harsh reversal of our own delivery.

As Dick Abberville explains on the last page, his chosen medium is a compromise between the "sustained exploration" of prose and "the brief and almost impatient illumination" of verse. The prose does not read so happily. It is made to do too many various jobs, for one thing: save space by recounting facts, correct the verse by giving a literal or different version of the same event, continue Abberville's self-analysis, comment sagely on Life. It is much less well-written than the verse, and in fact is often sadly infected by the verse rhythms surrounding it.

What are we to make of the episodes selected for this four-stage study in the growth of an individual? The novel's hero tells us they must be important because they chose themselves. We are not (thank God!) Summoned by Bells in *Pantaloon*; it is fiction, not self-justification; but the importance of the hero either as immortal soul or as representative figure is not established. I think this is true even of the most successful section, the last, where Dick is shown at his Public School, as a tormented new boy and finally leaving school, a potential tormentor on a large scale himself, though the connection is not (unless I am inattentive) directly enforced by the verse. The sour horror of the school is vividly convincing, the bullying, the piety, the furtive sex:

> The tarred suburban road, the inane companion;
> The gate and the lush autumnal field;
> Breath like an unwashed churn
> And fingers that stuttered at my flies.

– but it remains unrelated to any significant qualities in the hero or to an implied social standard. It is just an experience.

So the brilliant dramatic presentation of incipient Public School fascism at the very end, given in dialogue between Abberville and a tolerant-minded master, while it is the best thing of its kind I know and completely vindicates Toynbee's choice of medium (the line unobtrusively lengthens and grows limper to accommodate the mental world of the speaker), is still obstinately discontinuous with the rest of the book, and it is not easy to see how future instalments can put this right. We must only trust, with Tennyson, that somehow good will be the final goal of ill.

R. S. Thomas's subject is the farmer's ancient marriage with his soil betrayed by materialism, and the labourer's turned into hatred by dispossession – the land emptied of Godhead. What was once a true relationship, back-breaking and tough on the spirit but alive and deep, is now only a memory in the minds of the old, calling for pity, or has become a commercial parody of itself. The ideal, and the sadness of the ideal, are seen in the moving little poem " Once " : a farmer's love for his wife is benediction enough for his daily labour, and this simple Christianity keeps the rains out and postpones the end (" three Pines kept the weight of the sky From the roof patched with moss "); but the farmer is old and evening, for him, is the hearth of a dead day. These pieties are things of the past, like the old wife's memory of her own beauty. Thomas's earth is Welsh; it is the break-up of rural Wales that ostensibly concerns him (like most true countrymen it is the community and the job of farming he feels for, not " Nature ", which distinguishes him from his Scots/English counterpart, Andrew Young, who knows all the names. Thomas rarely goes beyond grass, thrushes, the best mutton). But the loss of rural innocence, though firmly felt, is only a local aspect of man's general loss : his separation from Eden and his acquiescence in that separation, shown by the machine-civilization that is supplanting the old pieties. Modern man has two hungers, only one of which could be satisfied by farming. In the poem " Genealogy " (at once a biological, political, and moral history), man is shown as fallen from the start, and stands now, a self-made urban stranger, enriched and multiplied out of others' suffering,

> In the hard light of the brief day
> Without roots, but with many branches.

These poems are deceptively simple. They are moving, and attractive. Formally they owe most, as is natural, to the country poets Edward Thomas and Robert Frost : the casual diction and apparently loose form, rhyme sometimes slipping into assonance before vanishing altogether. There is a tendency to keep a wry twist hidden in the tail of the poem; but the poem is never written-up so as to depend on a pay-off line. In content, however, in cast of mind and homeliness of diction, the affinity is with George Herbert. A poem like " Judgment Day ", with its casually dramatized opening (" Yes, that's how I was "), its humility clothed in everyday images :

> Lord, breathe once more
> On that sad mirror,
> Let me be lost
> In mist for ever
> Rather than own
> Such bleak reflections,

ınd its self-inflicted comedy:

Let me go back
On my two knees
Slowly to undo
The knot of life

- is very like one of Herbert's. Only in place of Herbert's passionate elf-mockery, Thomas more usually has self-effacement. Perhaps for this reason he likes evasive titles such as "Once", "Which?", and "Here". One often feels with Walter de la Mare's poems that the fewer words there ure to a line, the less blemish there is on his peculiar kind of perfection, ınd that if only he could have written a poem with no words in the line ıt all, it would have been easily his best. A poem like Thomas's "Judgment Day", or "Once", is a delicate spire of words: a single tactless word would bring it all down, and there is no tactless word; but all the words have to be as slight as possible so as to stay in place.

R. S. Thomas uses only very direct metaphors drawn from a small and traditional stock, and at their best these have the virility of a good parable: 'breaking the wild Mare of the soil with bare knuckles", "the grey ice of a face splintered by life's stone". Only his metaphors tend to be stereotyped in form as well as limited in tenor: time's knife, light's garment, the blood's drum, the brow's anvil, the fields' pages, life's stone, life's dry bone, life's hill. And sometimes they let him down, as when the hireling in "Too Late" comes obediently as a dog "To the pound's whistle" the ambiguity of "pound" as a depository for stray dogs and as twenty shillings doubles the discomfort, as once there is uncertainty each kind of pound is found to whistle less well than the other). The "pound's whistle" suggests too that Thomas's strength lies in his compassion for the unrooted tree of modern man, not in his assault on its causes. "The cold brain of the machine", by which he apparently means, quite literally, the tractor, is not what is destroying Prytherch and his race, as the farmers must surely have told him.

Those of us who have admired Thomas Blackburn's earlier books will soon recognise the tang of personality in these poems: the long lines, muscular with verbs, often having a characteristic alternation of masculine and feminine endings; the bold, open stanzas; the fearlessly lilting rhythms; the *personae* from folk-tale and Greek myth, performing their ancient roles with up-to-date gestures; the dark, writhing underworld of childish guilt, adult self-conflict, and numinous desire. Mannerisms that used to go with these characteristics have mostly disappeared: the vocative "O!", the anxious "I mean . . . " before the explication of a metaphor, the Yeatsian refrains. Yeats's voice is still audible, as in the *News of the World* poem:

I read of a woman, her child
Torn like a rag at the foot
Of a tree I have often passed,
Not guessing what lay at its root.
They have not found the man
Who wiped his hands on the grass –

but Blackburn's own voice is now strong enough to dominate what is said – no small achievement over a master who once declared that poetry should be like shouting across a street.

Blackburn is continually aware of childhood's persistence into adult life – the " long, black, index finger across the landscape of my middle age " – and of death's anticipatory reaching back into childhood itself. Adult life is always being disputed by both claimants. Sometimes the chaos of the psyche, the problem of inward passion and outward responsibility, is explained in the curiously simple terms of a Bad Self, a " shadow-man ", but more characteristically (and far more potently) we are given the rank flair of some animal that behaves unspeakably yet is the necessary source of all human energy, creation, and intuition. It is one's own fiery combustion that causes the smell of burning in the title. Those disturbingly wonderful lines from an earlier collection come to mind which show the conscious moral choice as reaching deadlock

Until we drop the reins and cease to guide
Our pacing animals who smell direction
Blown softly through the gap where our will died.

What has always been so impressive about this poetry at its best is the poet's unsparing curiosity into his own weakness. His integrity makes the single unhonest poem in the book all the more conspicuous – the sixteen lines entitled " Bombs ". It would be unjust to quote a bad poem entire, but as it is dependent on witty parallels it will bear paraphrase. I shuddered to think of men fingering their hydrogen-bombs, the writer says, till I remembered that death is inbuilt and native, not alien :

In plural or in singular,
Dying, of course, is what we are.

We each have the power to die, and can abuse it. When my own heart stops, the world will be blown to pieces – so I can say calmly that I, too, have the Bomb within me.

The logic is hideously false. " Dying is what we are ", fair enough; but " dying " is not quite what those who twiddle their hydrogen-bombs have in mind; nor is killing other people the same as " dying in plural "; nor is murder inbuilt in human beings as death is inbuilt, even in psychopaths. The Bomb-twiddler has nothing whatever in common with the kindly solipsist who points a gun at his own heart and threatens to " blow this world to pieces ". The poem is muddled and offensive, and mars what is otherwise a fine achievement.

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